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Wilson, John

THE WORKS

OF

PROFESSOR WILSON

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

EDITED BY HIS SON-IN-LAW

PROFESSOR FERRIER

VOL. X.

RECREATIONS OF CHRISTOPHER NORTH

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLVII

RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLVII

TR5835
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1855
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RECREATIONS

OF

CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

MAY-DAY.

Art thou beautiful, as of old, O wild, moorland, sylvan, and pastoral Parish! the Paradise in which our spirit dwelt beneath the glorious dawning of life—can it be, beloved world of boyhood, that thou art indeed beautiful as of old? Though round and round thy boundaries in half an hour could fly the flapping dove—though the martens, wheeling to and fro that ivied and wall-flowered ruin of a Castle, central in its own domain, seem in their more distant flight to glance their crescent wings over a vale rejoicing apart in another kirk-spire, yet how rich in streams, and rivulets, and rills, each with its own peculiar murmur—art Thou with thy bold bleak exposure, sloping upwards in ever lustrous undulations to the portals of the East! How endless the interchange of woods and meadows, glens, dells, and broomy nooks, without number, among thy banks and braes! And then of human dwellings—how rises the smoke, ever and anon, into the sky, all neighbouring on each other, so that the cock-crow is heard from homestead to homestead; while as you wander onwards, each roof still rises unexpectedly—and as solitary, as if it had been far remote. Fairest of Scotland's thousand parishes—neither Highland, nor Lowland—but undulating—let us again use the descriptive word—like the sea in sunset after a day of storms—yes,

Heaven's blessing be upon thee! Thou art indeed beautiful as of old!

The same heavens! More blue than any colour that tinges the flowers of earth—like the violet veins of a virgin's bosom. The stillness of those lofty clouds makes them seem whiter than the snow. Return, O lark! to thy grassy nest, in the furrow of the green brairded corn, for thy brooding mate can no longer hear thee soaring in the sky. Methinks there is little or no change on these coppice-woods, with their full budding branches all impatient for the spring. Yet twice have axe and bill-hook levelled them with the mossy stones, since among the broomy and briery knolls we sought the grey linnet's nest, or wondered to spy, among the rustling leaves, the robin-redbreast, seemingly forgetful of his winter benefactor, man. Surely there were trees here in former times, that now are gone—tall, far-spreading single trees, in whose shade used to lie the ruminating cattle, with the small herd-girl asleep. Gone are they, and dimly remembered as the uncertain shadows of dreams; yet not more forgotten than some living beings with whom our infancy and boyhood held converse—whose voices, laughter, eyes, forehead—hands so often grasped—arms linked in ours, as we danced along the braes—have long ceased to be more than images and echoes, incapable of commanding so much as one single tear. Alas! for the treachery of memory to all the holiest human affections, when beguiled by the slow but sure sorcery of time.

It is MAY-DAY, and we shall be happy as the season. What although some sad and solemn thoughts come suddenly across us, the day is not at nightfall felt to have been the less delightful, because shadows now and then bedimmed it, and moments almost mournful, of an unhymning hush, took possession of field or forest. We are all alone—a solitary pedestrian; and obeying the fine impulses of a will, whose motives are changeable as the cameleon's hues, our feet shall bear us glancingly along to the merry music of streams—or linger by the silent shores of lochs—or upon the hill-summit pause, ourselves the only spectator of a panorama painted by Spring, for our sole delight—or plunge into the old wood's magnificent exclusion from sky—where, at midsummer, day is as night—though not so now, for this is the season of buds and blossoms; and the cushat's nest is yet visible on the half-leafed boughs, and the

sunshine streams in upon the ground-flowers, that in another month will be cold and pale in the forest gloom, almost as those that bedeck the dead when the vault door is closed and all is silence.

What! shall we linger here within a little mile of the MANSE, wherein and among its pleasant bounds our boyish life glided murmuring away, like a stream that never, till it leaves its native hills, knows taint or pollution, and not hasten on to the dell, in which nest-like it is built, and guarded by some wonderful felicity of situation equally against all the winds? No. Thither as yet have we not courage to direct our footsteps—for that venerable Man has long been dead—not one of his ancient household now remains on earth. There the change, though it was gradual and unpainful, according to the gentlest laws of nature, has been entire and complete. The "old familiar faces" we can dream of, but never more shall see—and the voices that are now heard within those walls, what can they ever be to us, when we would fain listen in the silence of our spirit to the echoes of departed years? It is an appalling trial to approach a place where once we have been happier—happier far than ever we can be on this earth again; and a worse evil doth it seem to our imagination to return to Paradise, with a changed and saddened heart, than at first to be driven from it into the outer world, if still permitted to carry thither something of that spirit that had glorified our prime.

But yonder, we see, yet towers the Sycamore on the crown of the hill—the first great Tree in the parish that used to get green; for stony as seems the hard glebe, constricted by its bare and gnarled roots, they draw sustenance from afar; and not another knoll on which the sun so delights to pour his beams. Weeks before any other Sycamore, and almost as early as the alder or the birch—the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT, for so we schoolboys called it, unfolded itself like a banner. You could then see only the low windows of the dwelling—for eaves, roof, and chimneys all disappeared—and then, when you stood beneath, was not the sound of the bees like the very sound of the sea itself, continuous, unabating, all day long unto evening, when, as if the tide of life had ebbed, there was a perfect silence!

MOUNT PLEASANT! well indeed dost thou deserve the name,

bestowed on thee perhaps long ago, not by any one of the humble proprietors, but by the general voice of praise, all eyes being won by thy cheerful beauty. For from that shaded platform, what a sweet vision of fields and meadows, knolls, braes, and hills, uncertain gleamings of a river, the smoke of many houses, and glittering perhaps in the sunshine, the spire of the House of God! To have seen Adam Morrison, the Elder, sitting with his solemn, his austere Sabbath-face, beneath the pulpit, with his expressive eyes fixed on the Preacher, you could not but have judged him to be a man of a stern character and austere demeanour. To have seen him at labour on the working days, you might almost have thought him the serf of some tyrant-lord, for into all the toils of the field he carried the force of a mind that would suffer nothing to be undone that strength and skill could achieve; but within the humble porch of his own house, beside his own board, and his own fireside, he was a man to be kindly esteemed by his guests, by his own family tenderly and reverently beloved. His wife was the comeliest matron in the parish, a woman of active habits and a strong mind, but tempering the natural sternness of her husband's character with that genial and jocund cheerfulness, that of all the lesser virtues is the most efficient to the happiness of a household. One daughter only had they, and we could charm our heart even now, by evoking the vanished from oblivion, and imaging her over and over again in the light of words; but although all objects, animate and inanimate, seem always tinged with an air of sadness when they are past —and as at present we are resolved to be cheerful—obstinately to resist all access of melancholy—an enemy to the pathetic —and a scorner of shedders of tears—therefore let Mary Morrison rest in her grave, and let us paint a pleasant picture of a May-Day afternoon, and enjoy it as it was enjoyed of old, beneath that stately Sycamore, with the grandisonant name of The Glory of Mount Pleasant.

There, under the murmuring shadow round and round that noble stem, used on May-day to be fitted a somewhat fantastic board, all deftly arrayed in home-spun drapery, white as the patches of unmelted snow on the distant mountain-head; and on various seats—stumps, stones, stools, creepies, forms, chairs, armless and with no spine, or high-backed and elbowed, and the carving-work thereof most intricate and allegorical—took

their places, after much formal ceremony of scraping and bowing, blushing and curtsying, old, young, and middle-aged, of high and low degree, till in one moment all were hushed by the Minister shutting his eyes, and holding up his hand to ask a blessing. And "well worthy of a grace as lang's a tether," was the MAY-DAY meal spread beneath the shadow of the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT. But the Minister uttered only a few fervent sentences, and then we all fell to the curds and cream. What smooth, pure, bright burnished beauty on those horn-spoons! How apt to the hand the stalk—to the mouth how apt the bowl! Each guest drew closer to his breast the deep broth-plate of delft, rather more than full of curds, many million times more deliciously desirable even than blanc-mange, and then filled to overflowing with a blessed outpouring of creamy richness that tenaciously descended from an enormous jug, the peculiar expression of whose physiognomy, particularly the nose, we will carry with us to the grave! The dairy at MOUNT PLEASANT consisted of twenty cows—almost all spring calvers, and of the Ayrshire breed—so you may guess what cream! The spoon could not stand in it,—it was not so thick as that—for that was too thick,—but the spoon, when placed upright in it, retained its perpendicularity for a while, and then, when uncertain on which side to fall, was grasped by the hand of hungry schoolboy, and steered with its fresh and fragrant freight into a mouth already open in wonder. Never beneath the sun, moon, and stars, were such oatmeal cakes, pease-scones, and barley-bannocks, as at MOUNT PLEASANT. You could have eaten away at them with pleasure, even although not hungry—and yet it was impossible of them to eat too much—Manna that they were!! Seldom indeed is butter yellow on May-day. But the butter of the gudewife of Mount Pleasant—such, and so rich was the old lea-pasture—was coloured like the crocus, before the young thrushes had left the nest in the honey-suckled corner of the gavel-end. Not a single hair in the churn. Then what honey and what jam! The first, not heather, for that is too luscious, especially after such cream, but the pure white virgin honey, like dew shaken from clover, but now *querny* after winter keep; and oh! over a layer of such butter on such barley bannocks was such honey, on such a day, in such company, and to such palates, too divine to be described by

such a pen as that now wielded by such a writer! The Jam! It was of gooseberries—the small black hairy ones—gathered to a very minute from the bush, and boiled to a very moment in the pan! A bannock studded with some dozen or two of such grozets was more beautiful than a corresponding expanse of heaven adorned with as many stars. The question, with the gauey and generous gudewife of Mount Pleasant, was not —"My dear laddie, which will ye hae—hinny or jam?" but, "Which will ye hae first?" The honey, we well remember, was in two huge brown jugs, or jars, or crocks; the jam, in half-a-dozen white cans of more moderate dimensions, from whose mouths a veil of thin transparent paper was withdrawn, while, like a steam of rich distilled perfumes, rose a fruity fragrance, that blended with the vernal balminess of the humming Sycamore. There the bees were all at work for next May-day, happy as ever bees were on Hybla itself; and gone now though be the age of gold, happy as Arcadians were we, nor wanted our festal-day or pipe or song; for to the breath of Harry Wilton, the young English boy, the flute gave forth tones almost as liquid sweet as those that flowed from the lips of Mary Morrison herself, who alone, of all singers in hut or hall that ever drew tears, left nothing for the heart or the imagination to desire in any one of Scotland's ancient melodies.

Never had Mary Morrison heard the old ballad-airs sung, except during the mid-day hour of rest, in the corn or hay field—and rude singers are they all—whether male or female voices—although sometimes with a touch of natural pathos that finds its way to the heart. But as the nightingale would sing truly its own variegated song, although it never were to hear any one of its own kind warbling from among the shrub-roots, and the lark, though alone on earth, would sing the hymn well known at the gate of heaven, so all untaught but by the nature within her, and inspired by her own delightful genius alone, did Mary Morrison feel all the measures of those ancient melodies, and give them all an expression at once simple and profound. People who said they did not care about music, especially Scottish music, it was so monotonous and insipid, laid aside their indifferent looks before three notes of the simplest air had left Mary Morrison's lips, as she sat faintly blushing, less in bashfulness than in her own emotion, with her little hands playing perhaps with flowers, and her

eyes fixed on the ground, or raised, ever and anon, to the roof. "In all common things," would most people say, "she is but a very ordinary girl—but her musical turn is really very singular indeed;"—but her happy father and mother knew, that in all common things—that is, in all the duties of an humble and innocent life, their Mary was by nature excellent as in the melodies and harmonies of song—and that while her voice in the evening-psalm was as angel's sweet, so was her spirit almost pure as an angel's, and nearly inexperienced of sin.

Proud, indeed, were her parents on that May-day to look upon her—and to listen to her—as their Mary sat beside the young English boy—admired of all observers—and happier than she had ever been in this world before, in the charm of their blended music, and the unconscious affection—sisterly, yet more than sisterly, for brother she had none—that towards one so kind and noble was yearning at her heart.

Beautiful were they both; and when they sat side-by-side in their music, insensible must that heart have been by whom they were not both admired and beloved. It was thought that they loved one another too, too well; for Harry Wilton was the grandson of an English Peer, and Mary Morrison a peasant's child; but they could not love too well—she in her tenderness—he in his passion—for, with them, life and love was a delightful dream, out of which they were never to be awakened. For as by some secret sympathy, both sickened on the same day—of the same fever—and died at the same hour;—and not from any dim intention of those who buried them, but accidentally, and because the burial-ground of the Minister and the Elder adjoined, were they buried almost in the same grave—for not half a yard of daisied turf divided them—a curtain between the beds on which brother and sister slept.

In their delirium they both talked about each other—Mary Morrison and Harry Wilton—yet their words were not words of love, only of common kindness; for although on their death-beds they did not talk about death, but frequently about that May-day Festival, and other pleasant meetings in neighbours' houses, or in the Manse. Mary sometimes rose up in bed, and in imagination joined her voice to that of the flute which to his lips was to breathe no more; and even

at the very self-same moment—so it wonderfully was—did he tell all to be hushed, for that Mary Morrison was about to sing the Flowers of the Forest.

Methinks that no deep impressions of the past, although haply they may sleep for ever, and seem as if they had ceased to be, are ever utterly obliterated; but that they may, one and all, reappear at some hour or other however distant, legible as at the very moment they were first engraven on the memory. Not by the power of meditation are the long-ago vanished thoughts or emotions restored to us, in which we found delight or disturbance; but of themselves do they seem to arise, not undesired indeed, but unbidden, like sea-birds that come unexpectedly floating up into some inland vale, because, unknown to us who wonder at them, the tide is flowing and the breezes blow from the main. Bright as the living image stands now before us the ghost—for what else is it than the ghost—of Mary Morrison, just as she stood before us on one particular day—in one particular place, innumerable years ago! It was at the close of one of those midsummer days which melt away into twilight, rather than into night, although the stars are visible, and bird and beast asleep. All by herself, as she walked along between the braes, was she singing a hymn,—

"And must this body die?
This mortal frame decay?
And must these feeble limbs of mine
Lie mouldering in the clay?"

Not that the child had any thought of death, for she was as full of life as the star above her was of lustre—tamed though they both were by the holy hour. At our bidding she renewed the strain that had ceased as we met, and continued to sing it while we parted, her voice dying away in the distance, like an angel's from a broken dream. Never heard we that voice again, for in three little weeks it had gone, to be extinguished no more, to join the heavenly choirs at the feet of the Redeemer.

Did both her parents lose all love to life, when their sole daughter was taken away? And did they die finally of broken hearts? No—such is not the natural working of the human spirit, if kept in repair by pure and pious thought. Never were they so happy indeed as they had once been—nor was their happiness of the same kind. Oh! different far in resig-

nation that often wept when it did not repine—in faith that now held a tenderer commerce with the skies! Smiles were not very long of being again seen at Mount Pleasant. An orphan cousin of Mary's—they had been as sisters—took her place, and filled it too, as far as the living can ever fill the place of the dead. Common cares continued for a while to occupy the Elder and his wife, for there were not a few to whom their substance was to be a blessing. Ordinary observers could not have discerned any abatement of his activities in field or market; but others saw that the toil to him was now but a duty that had formerly been a delight. Mount Pleasant was let to a relative, and the Morrisons retired to a small house, with a garden, a few hundred yards from the kirk. Let him be strong as a giant, infirmities often come on the hard-working man before you can well call him old. It was so with Adam Morrison. He broke down fast, we have been told, in his sixtieth year, and after that partook but of one sacrament. Not in tales of fiction alone do those who have long loved and well, lay themselves down and die in each other's arms. Such happy deaths are recorded on humble tombstones; and there is one on which this inscription may be read—"HERE LIE THE BODIES OF ADAM MORRISON AND OF HELEN ARMOUR HIS SPOUSE. THEY DIED ON THE 1ST OF MAY 17—. HERE ALSO LIES THE BODY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MARY MORRISON, WHO DIED JUNE 2, 17—." The headstone is a granite slab—as they almost all are in that kirkyard—and the kirk itself is of the same enduring material. But touching that grave is a Marble Monument, white almost as the very snow, and, in the midst of the emblazonry of death, adorned with the armorial bearings belonging to a family of the high-born.

Sworn Brother of our soul! during the bright ardours of boyhood, when the present was all-sufficient in its own bliss, the past soon forgotten, and the future unfeared, what might have been thy lot, beloved Harry Wilton, had thy span of life been prolonged to this very day? Better—oh! far better was it for thee and thine that thou didst so early die: for it seemeth that a curse is on that lofty lineage; and that, with all their genius, accomplishments, and virtues, dishonour comes and goes, a familiar and privileged guest, out and in their house. Shame never veiled the light of those bold eyes, nor

tamed the eloquence of those sunny lips, nor ever for a single moment bowed down that young princely head that, like a fast-growing flower, seemed each successive morning to be visibly rising up towards a stately manhood. But the time was not far distant, when to thee life would have undergone a rueful transformation. Thy father, expatriated by the spells of a sorceress, and forced into foreign countries, to associate with vice, worthlessness, profligacy, and crime! Thy mother, dead of a broken heart! And that lovely sister, who came to the Manse with her jewelled hair—But all these miserable things who could prophesy, at the hour when we and the weeping villagers laid thee, apart from the palace and the burial-vault of thy high-born ancestors, without anthem or organ-peal, among the humble dead? Needless and foolish were all those floods of tears. In thy brief and beautiful course, nothing have we who loved thee to lament or condemn. In few memories, indeed, doth thy image now survive; for in process of time what young face fadeth not away from eyes busied with the shows of this living world? What young voice is not bedumbed to ears for ever filled with its perplexing din? Yet thou, Nature, on this glorious May-day, rejoicing in all the plenitude of thy bliss—we call upon thee to bear witness to the intensity of our never-dying grief! Ye fields, that long ago we so often trode together, with the wind-swept shadows hovering about our path—Ye streams, whose murmur awoke our imaginations, as we lay reading, or musing together in day-dreams, among the broomy braes—Ye woods, where we started at the startled cushat, or paused, without a word, to hear the creature's solitary moans and murmurs deepening the far-off hush, already so profound—Ye moors and mosses, black yet beautiful, with your peat-trenches overshadowed by the heather-blossoms that scented the wilderness afar—where the little maiden, sent from the shieling on errands to town or village in the country below, seemed, as we met her in the sunshine, to rise up before us for our delight, like a fairy from the desert bloom—Thou loch, remote in thy treeless solitude, and with nought reflected in thy many-springed waters but those low pastoral hills of excessive green, and the white-barred blue of heaven—no creature on its shores but our own selves, keenly angling in the breezes, or lying in the shaded sunshine, with some book of old

ballads, or strain of some Immortal yet alive on earth—one and all bear witness to our undying affection, that silently now feeds on grief! And, oh! what overflowing thoughts did that shout of ours now awaken from the hanging tower of the Old Castle—"Wilton, Wilton!" The name of the long-ago buried faintly and afar-off repeated by an echo!

A pensive shade has fallen across MAY-DAY; and while the sun is behind those castellated clouds, our imagination is willing to retire into the saddest places of memory, and gather together stories and tales of tears. And many such there are, annually sprinkled all round the humble huts of our imaginative and religious land, even like the wildflowers that, in endless succession, disappearing and reappearing in their beauty, Spring drops down upon every brae. And as ofttimes some one particular tune, some one pathetic but imperfect and fragmentary part of an old melody, will nearly touch the heart, when it is dead to the finest and most finished strain; so now a faint and dim tradition comes upon us, giving birth to uncertain and mysterious thoughts. It is an old Tradition. They were called the BLESSED FAMILY! Far up at the head of yonder glen of old was their dwelling, and in their garden sparkled the translucent well that is the source of the stream that animates the parish with a hundred waterfalls. Father, mother, and daughter—it was hard to say which of the three was the most beloved! Yet they were not native here, but brought with them, from some distant place, the soft and silvery accents of the pure English tongue, and manners most gracious in their serene simplicity; while over a life composed of acts of charity was spread a stillness that nothing ever disturbed—the stillness of a thoughtful pity for human sins and sorrows, yet not unwilling to be moved to smiles by the breath of joy. In those days the very heart of Scotland was distracted—persecution scattered her prayers—and during the summer months, families remained shut up in fear within their huts, as if the snowdrifts of winter had blocked up and buried their doors. It was as if the shadow of a thundercloud hung over all the land, so that men's hearts quaked as they looked up to heaven—when, lo! all at once, Three gracious Visitants appeared! Imagination invested their foreheads with a halo; and as they walked on their missions of mercy, exclaimed—How beautiful are their feet! Few

words was the Child ever heard to speak, except some words of prayer; but her image-like stillness breathed a blessing wherever it smiled, and all the little maidens loved her, when hushed almost into awe by her spiritual beauty, as she knelt with them in their morning and evening orisons. The Mother's face, too, it is said, was pale as a face of grief, while her eyes seemed always happy, and a tone of thanksgiving was in her voice. Her Husband leant upon her on his way to the grave—for his eye's excessive brightness glittered with death—and often, as he prayed beside the sick-bed, his cheek became like ashes, for his heart in a moment ceased to beat, and then, as if about to burst in agony, sounded audibly in the silence. Journeying on did they all seem to heaven; yet as they were passing by, how loving and how full of mercy! To them belonged some blessed power to wave away the sword that would fain have smitten the Saints. The dew-drops on the greensward before the cottage door, they suffered not to be polluted with blood. Guardian Angels were they thought to be, and such indeed they were, for what else are the holy powers of innocence?—Guardian Angels sent to save some of God's servants on earth from the choking tide and the scorching fire. Often, in the clear and starry nights, did the dwellers among all these little dells, and up along all these low hill-sides, hear music flowing down from heaven, responsive to the hymns of the Blessed Family. Music without the syllabling of words—yet breathing worship, and with the spirit of piety filling all the Night-Heavens. One whole day and night passed by, and not a hut had been enlightened by their presence. Perhaps they had gone away without warning as they had come—having been sent on another mission. With soft steps one maiden, and then another, entered the door, and then was heard the voice of weeping and of loud lament. The three lay, side by side, with their pale faces up to heaven. Dora, for that is the name tradition has handed down—Dorothea, the gift of God, lay between her Father and her Mother, and all their hands were lovingly and peacefully entwined. No agonies had been there—unknown what hand, human or divine, had closed their eyelids and composed their limbs; but there they lay as if asleep, not to be awakened by the burst of sunshine that dazzled upon their smiling countenances, cheek to cheek, in the awful beauty of united death.

The deep religion of that troubled time had sanctified the Strangers almost into an angelic character; and when the little kirk-bells were again heard tinkling through the air of peace, (the number of the martyrs being complete), the beauty with which their living foreheads had been invested, reappeared to the eyes of imagination, as the Poets whom Nature kept to herself walked along the moonlight hills. "The Blessed Family," which had been as a household word, appertaining to them while they lived, now when centuries have gone by, is still full of a dim but divine meaning; the spirit of the tradition having remained, while its framework has almost fallen into decay.

How beautifully emerges that sun-stricken Cottage from the rocks, that all around it are floating in a blue vapoury light! Were we so disposed, methinks we could easily write a little book entirely about the obscure people that have lived and died about that farm, by name Logan Braes. Neither is it without its old traditions. One May-day long ago—some two centuries since—that rural festival was there interrupted by a thunderstorm, and the party of youths and maidens, driven from the budding arbours, were all assembled in the ample kitchen. The house seemed to be in the very heart of the thunder; and the master began to read, without declaring it to be a religious service, a chapter of the Bible; but the frequent flashes of lightning so blinded him, that he was forced to lay down the Book, and all then sat still without speaking a word; many with pale faces, and none without a mingled sense of awe and fear. The maiden forgot her bashfulness as the rattling peals shook the roof-tree, and hid her face in her lover's bosom; the children crept closer and closer, each to some protecting knee, and the dogs came all into the house, and lay down in dark places. Now and then there was a convulsive, irrepressible, but half-stifled shriek—some sobbed —and a loud hysterical laugh from one overcome with terror sounded ghastly between the deepest of all dread repose—that which separates one peal from another, when the flash and the roar are as one, and the thick air smells of sulphur. The body feels its mortal nature, and shrinks as if about to be withered into nothing. Now the muttering thunder seems to have changed its place to some distant cloud—now, as if returning to blast those whom it had spared, waxes louder and

fiercer than before—till the Great Tree that shelters the house is shivered with a noise like the masts of a ship carried away by the board. "Look, father, look—see yonder is an Angel all in white, descending from heaven!" said little Alice, who had already been almost in the attitude of prayer, and now clasped her hands together, and steadfastly, and without fear of the lightning, eyed the sky. "One of God's Holy Angels—one of those who sing before the Lamb!" And with an inspired rapture the fair child sprung to her feet. "See ye her not—see ye her not—father—mother! Lo! she beckons to me with a palm in her hand, like one of the palms in that picture in our Bible, when our Saviour is entering into Jerusalem! There she comes, nearer and nearer the earth—Oh! pity, forgive, and have mercy on me, thou most beautiful of all the Angels—even for His name's sake." All eyes were turned towards the black heavens, and then to the raving child. Her mother clasped her to her bosom, afraid that terror had turned her brain—and her father going to the door, surveyed an ampler space of the sky. She flew to his side, and clinging to him again, exclaimed in a wild outcry, "On her forehead a star! on her forehead a star! And oh! on what lovely wings she is floating away, away into eternity! The Angel, father, is calling me by my Christian name, and I must no more abide on earth; but, touching the hem of her garment, be wafted away to heaven!" Sudden as a bird let loose from the hand, darted the maiden from her father's bosom, and with her face upward to the skies, pursued her flight. Young and old left the house, and at that moment the forked lightning came from the crashing cloud, and struck the whole tenement into ruins. Not a hair on any head was singed; and with one accord the people fell down upon their knees. From the eyes of the child, the Angel, or Vision of the Angel, had disappeared; but on her return to heaven, the Celestial heard the hymn that rose from those that were saved, and above all the voices, the small sweet silvery voice of her whose eyes alone were worthy of beholding a Saint Transfigured.

For several hundred years has that farm belonged to the family of the Logans, nor has son or daughter ever stained the name—while some have imparted to it, in its humble annals,

what well may be called lustre. Many a time have we stood when a boy, all alone, beginning to be disturbed by the record of heroic or holy lives, in the kirkyard, beside the GRAVE OF THE MARTYRS—the grave in which Christian and Hannah Logan, mother and daughter, were interred. Many a time have we listened to the story of their deaths, from the lips of one who well knew how to stir the hearts of the young, till "from their eyes they wiped the tears that sacred pity had engendered." Nearly a hundred years old was she that eloquent narrator—the Minister's mother—yet she could hear a whisper, and read the Bible without spectacles—although we sometimes used to suspect her of pretending to be reading off the Book, when, in fact, she was reciting from memory. The old lady often took a walk in the kirkyard—and being of a pleasant and cheerful nature, though in religious principle inflexibly austere, many were the most amusing anecdotes that she related to us and our compeers, all huddled round her, "where heaved the turf in many a mouldering heap." But the evening converse was always sure to have a serious termination—and the venerable matron could not be more willing to tell, than we to hear again and again, were it for the twentieth repetition, some old tragic event that gathered a deeper interest from every recital, as if on each we became better acquainted with the characters of those to whom it had befallen, till the chasm that time had dug between them and us disappeared, and we felt for the while that their happiness or misery and ours were essentially interdependent. At first she used, we well remember, to fix her solemn spirit-like eyes on our faces, to mark the different effects her story produced on her hearers; but ere long she became possessed wholly by the pathos of her own narrative, and with fluctuating features and earnest action of head and hands poured forth her eloquence, as if soliloquising among the tombs.

"Ay, ay, my dear boys, that is the grave o' the Martyrs. My father saw them die. The tide o' the far-ebbed sea was again beginning to flow, but the sands o' the bay o' death lay sae dry, that there were but few spots where a bairn could hae wat its feet. Thousands and tens o' thousands were standing a' roun' the edge of the bay—that was in shape just like that moon—and then twa stakes were driven deep into the

sand, that the waves o' the returning sea michtna loosen them—and my father, who was but a boy like ane o' yourselves noo, waes me, didna he see wi' his ain een Christian Logan, and her wee dochter Hannah, for she was but eleven years auld—hurried alang by the enemies o' the Lord, and tied to their accursed stakes within the power o' the sea.. He who holds the waters in the hollow o' his hand, thocht my father, will not suffer them to choke the prayer within those holy lips—but what kent he o' the dreadfu' judgments o' the Almighty? Dreadfu' as those judgments seemed to be, o' a' that crowd o' mortal creatures there were but only twa that drew their breath without a shudder—and these twa were Christian Logan and her beautifu' wee dochter Hannah, wi' her rosy cheeks, for they blanched not in that last extremity, her blue een, and her gowden hair, that glittered like a star in the darkness o' that dismal day. 'Mother, be not afraid,' she was heard to say, when the foam o' the first wave broke about their feet—and just as these words were uttered, all the great black clouds melted away from the sky, and the sun shone forth in the firmament like the all-seeing eye of God. The martyrs turned their faces a little towards one another, for the cords could not wholly hinder them, and wi' voices as steady and as clear as ever they sang the psalm within the walls o' that kirk, did they, while the sea was mounting up—up from knee—waist—breast—neck—chin—lip—sing praises and thanksgivings unto God. As soon as Hannah's voice was drowned, it seemed as if her mother, before the water reached her own lips, bowed and gave up the ghost. While the people were all gazing the heads of both martyrs disappeared, and nothing then was to be seen on the face o' the waters, but here and there a bit white breaking wave or silly sea-bird floating on the flow o' the tide into the bay. Back and back had aye fallen the people, as the tide was roarin' on wi' a hollow soun'—and now that the water was high aboon the heads o' the martyrs, what chained that dismal congregation to the sea-shore? It was the countenance o' a man that had suddenly come down frae his hiding-place amang the moors—and who now knew that his wife and daughter were bound to stakes deep down in the waters o' the very bay that his eyes beheld rolling, and his ears heard roaring—all the while that there was a God in heaven! Naebody could speak to

him—although they all beseeched their Maker to have compassion upon him, and not to let his heart break and his reason fail. 'The stakes! the stakes! O Jesus! point out to me, with thy own scarred hand, the place where my wife and daughter are bound to the stakes—and I may yet bear them up out of the sand, and bring the bodies ashore—to be restored to life! O brethren, brethren!—said ye that my Christian and my Hannah have been for an hour below the sea? And was it from fear of fifty armed men, that so many thousand fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, rescued them not from such cruel, cruel death?' After uttering mony mair sicklike raving words, he suddenly plunged into the sea, and, being a strong swimmer, was soon far out into the bay—and led by some desperate instinct to the very place where the stakes were fixed in the sand. Perfectly resigned had the martyrs been to their doom—but in the agonies o' that horrible death, there had been some struggles o' the mortal body, and the weight o' the waters had borne down the stakes, so that, just as if they had been lashed to a spar to enable them to escape from shipwreck, baith the bodies came floatin' to the surface, and his hand grasped, without knowing it, his ain Hannah's gowden hair—sairly defiled, ye may weel think, wi' the sand—baith their faces changed frae what they ance were by the wrench o' death. Father, mother, and daughter came a'thegither to the shore—and there was a cry went far and wide, up even to the hiding-places o' the faithfu' among the hags and cleuchs i' the moors, that the sea had given up the living, and that the martyrs were triumphant, even in this world, over the powers o' Sin and o' Death. Yea, they were indeed triumphant;—and well might the faithfu' sing aloud in the desert, 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' for these three bodies were but as the weeds on which they lay stretched out to the pitying gaze of the multitude, but their spirits had gane to heaven to receive the eternal rewards o' sanctity and truth."

Not a house in all the parish—scarcely excepting Mount Pleasant itself—all round and about which our heart could in some dreamy hour raise to life a greater multitude of dear old remembrances, all touching ourselves, than Logan Braes. The old people, when we first knew them, we used to think

somewhat apt to be surly—for they were Seceders—and owing to some unavoidable prejudices, which we were at no great pains to vanquish, we Manse-boys recognised something repulsive in that most respectable word. Yet for the sake of that sad story of the Martyrs, there was always something affecting to us in the name of Logan Braes; and though Beltane was of old a Pagan Festival, celebrated with grave idolatries round fires ablaze on a thousand hills, yet old Laurence Logan would sweeten his vinegar aspect on May-day, would wipe out a score of wrinkles, and calm, as far as that might be, the terrors of his shaggy eyebrows. A little gentleness of manner goes a long way with such young folk as we were all then, when it is seen naturally and easily worn for our sakes, and in sympathy with our accustomed glee, by one who in his ordinary deportment may have added the austerity of religion to the venerableness of old age. Smiles from old Laurence Logan, the Seceder, were like rare sun-glimpses in the gloom—and made the hush of his house pleasant as a more cheerful place; for through the restraint laid on reverent youth by feeling akin to fear, the heart ever and anon bounded with freedom in the smile of the old man's eyes. Plain was his own apparel—a suit of the hodden-grey. His wife, when in full dress, did not remind us of a Quakeress, for a Quakeress then had we never seen—but we often think now, when in company with a still, sensible, cheerful, and comely-visaged matron of that sect, of her of Logan Braes. No waster was she of her tears, or her smiles, or her words, or her money, or her meal—either among those of her own blood, or the stranger or the beggar that was within her gates. You heard not her foot on the floor—yet never was she idle—moving about in doors and out, from morning till night, so placid and so composed, and always at small cost dressed so decently, so becomingly to one who was not yet old, and had not forgotten—why should she not remember it?—that she was esteemed in youth a beauty, and that it was not for want of a richer and younger lover that she agreed at last to become the wife of the Laird of Logan Braes.

Their family consisted of two sons and a niece;—and be thou who thou mayest that hast so far read our May-day, we doubt not that thine eyes will glance—however rapidly—over another page, nor fling it contemptuously aside, because amidst

all the chance and change of administrations, ministries, and ministers in high places, there murmur along the channels of our memory "the simple annals of the poor," like unpolluted streams that sweep not by city walls.

Never were two brothers more unlike in all things—in mind, body, habits, and disposition—than Lawrie and Willie Logan—and we see, as in a glass, at this very moment, both their images. "Wee Wise Willie"—for by that name he was known over several parishes—was one of those extraordinary creatures that one may liken to a rarest plant, which nature sows here and there—sometimes for ever unregarded—among the common families of Flowers. Early sickness had been his lot—continued with scarcely any interruption from his cradle to school-years—so that not only was his stature stunted, but his whole frame was delicate in the extreme; and his pale small-featured face, remarkable for large, soft, down-looking, hazel eyes, dark-lashed in their lustre, had a sweet feminine character, that corresponded well with his voice, his motions, and his in-door pursuits—all serene and composed, and interfering with the outgoings of no other living thing. All sorts of scholarship, such as the parish schoolmaster knew, he mastered as if by intuition. His slate was quickly covered with long calculations, by which the most puzzling questions were solved; and ere he was nine years old, he had made many pretty mechanical contrivances with wheels and pulleys, that showed in what direction lay the natural bent of his genius. Languages, too, the creature seemed to see into with quickest eyes, and with quickest ears to catch their sounds—so that, at the same tender age, he might have been called a linguist, sitting with his Greek and Latin books on a stool beside him by the fireside during the long winter nights. All the neighbours who had any books, cheerfully lent them to "Wee Wise Willie," and the Manse-boys gave him many a supply. At the head of every class he, of course, was found—but no ambition had he to be there; and like a bee that works among many thousand others on the clover-lea, heedless of their murmurs, and intent wholly on its own fragrant toil, did he go from task to task—although that was no fitting name for the studious creature's meditations on all he read or wrought—no more a task for him to grow in knowledge and in thought, than for a lily of the field to lift up

its head towards the sun. That child's religion was like all the other parts of his character—as prone to tears as that of other children, when they read of the Divine Friend dying for them on the cross; but it was profounder far than theirs, when it shed no tears, and only made the paleness of his countenance more like that which we imagine to be the paleness of a phantom. No one ever saw him angry, complaining, or displeased; for angelical indeed was his temper, purified, like gold in fire, by suffering. He shunned not the company of other children, but loved all, as by them all he was more than beloved. In few of their plays could he take an active share; but sitting a little way off, still attached to the merry brotherhood, though in their society he had no part to enact, he read his book on the knoll, or, happy dreamer, sunk away among the visions of his own thoughts. There was poetry in that child's spirit, but it was too essentially blended with his whole happiness in life, often to be embodied in written words. A few compositions were found in his own small beautiful handwriting after his death—hymns and psalms. Prayers, too, had his heart indited—but they were not in measured language—framed, in his devout simplicity, on the model of our Lord's. How many hundred times have we formed a circle round him in the gloaming, all sitting or lying on the greensward, before the dews had begun to descend, listening to his tales and stories of holy or heroic men and women, who had been greatly good and glorious in the days of old! Not unendeared to his imagination were the patriots, who, living and dying, loved the liberties of the land—Tell—Bruce—or Wallace, he in whose immortal name a thousand rocks rejoice, while many a wood bears it on its summits as they are swinging to the storm. Weak as a reed that is shaken in the wind, or the stalk of a flower that tremblingly sustains its blossoms beneath the dews that feed their transitory lustre, was he whose lips were so eloquent to read the eulogies of mighty men of war riding mailed through bloody battles. What matters it that this frame of dust be frail, and of tiny size—still may it be the tenement of a lordly spirit. But high as such warfare was, it satisfied not that thoughtful child—for other warfare there was to read of, which was to him a far deeper and more divine delight—the warfare waged by good men against the legions of sin, and closed triumph-

antly in the eye of God—let this world deem as it will—on obscurest death-beds, or at the stake, or on the scaffold, where a profounder even than Sabbath silence glorifies the martyr far beyond any shout that from the immense multitude would have torn the concave of the heavens.

What a contrast to that creature was his elder brother! Lawrie was eighteen years old when first we visited Logan Braes, and was a perfect hero in strength and stature—Bob Howie alone his equal—but Bob was then in the West Indies. In the afternoons, after his work was over in the fields or in the barn, he had pleasure in getting us Manse-boys to accompany him to the Moor-Lochs for an hour's angling or two in the evening, when the large trouts came to the gravelly shallows, and, as we waded mid-leg deep, would sometimes take the fly among our very feet. Or he would go with us into the heart of the great wood, to show us where the foxes had their earths—the party being sometimes so fortunate as to see the cubs disporting at the mouth of the briery aperture in the strong and root-bound soil. Or we followed him, so far as he thought it safe for us to do so, up the foundations of the castle, and in fear and wonder that no repetition of the adventurous feat ever diminished, saw him take the young starling from the crevice beneath the tuft of wall-flowers. What was there of the bold and daring that Lawrie Logan was not, in our belief, able to perform? We were all several years younger—boys from nine to fifteen—and he had shot up into sudden manhood—not only into its shape but its strength—yet still the boyish spirit was fresh within him, and he never wearied of us in such excursions. The minister had a good opinion of his principles, knowing how he had been brought up, and did not discountenance his visits to the Manse, nor ours to Logan Braes. Then what danger could we be in, go where we might, with one who had more than once shown how eager he was to risk his own life when that of another was in jeopardy? Generous and fearless youth! To thee we owed our own life—although seldom is that rescue now remembered—(for what will not in this turmoiling world be forgotten?) when in pride of the newly-acquired art of swimming, we had ventured—with our clothes on too—some ten yards into the Brother-Loch, to disentangle our line from the water-lilies. It seemed that a hundred cords had

got entangled round our legs, and our heart quaked too desperately to suffer us to shriek—but Lawrie Logan had his hand on us in a minute, and brought us to shore as easily as a Newfoundland dog lands a bit of floating wood.

But that was a momentary danger, and Lawrie Logan ran but small risk, you will say, in saving us; so let us not extol that instance of his intrepidity. But fancy to yourself, gentle reader, the hideous mouth of an old coal-pit, that had not been worked for time immemorial, overgrown with thorns, and briers, and brackens, but still visible from a small mount above it, for some yards down its throat—the very throat of death and perdition. But can you fancy also the childish and superstitious terror with which we all regarded that coal-pit, for it was said to be a hundred fathom deep—with water at the bottom—so that you had to wait for many moments—almost a minute—before you heard a stone, first beating against its sides—from one to the other—plunge at last into the pool profound. In that very field, too, a murder had been perpetrated, and the woman's corpse flung by her sweetheart into that coal-pit. One day some unaccountable impulse had led a band of us into that interdicted field—which we remember was not arable—but said to be a place where a hare was always sure to be found sitting among the binweeds and thistles. A sort of thrilling horror urged us on closer and closer to the mouth of the pit—when Wee Wise Willie's foot slipping on the brae, he bounded with inexplicable force along—in among the thorns, briers, and brackens—through the whole hanging mat, and without a shriek, down—down—down into destruction. We all saw it happen—every one of us—and it is scarcely too much to say, that we were for a while all mad with horror. Yet we felt ourselves borne back instinctively from the horrible pit—and as aid we could give none, we listened if we could hear any cry—but there was none—and we all flew together out of the dreadful field, and again collecting ourselves together, feared to separate on the different roads to our homes. "Oh! can it be that our Wee Wise Willie has this moment died sic a death—and no a single ane amang us a' greetin for his sake?" said one of us aloud; and then indeed did we burst out into rueful sobbing, and ask one another who could carry such tidings to Logan Braes? All at once we heard a clear, rich, mellow whistle

as of a blackbird—and there with his favourite collie, searching for a stray lamb among the knolls, was Lawrie Logan, who hailed us with a laughing voice, and then asked us, "Where is Wee Willie?—hae ye flung him like another Joseph into the pit?" The consternation of our faces could not be misunderstood—whether we told him or not what had happened we do not know—but he staggered, as if he would have fallen down—and then ran off with amazing speed—not towards Logan Braes—but the village. We continued helplessly to wander about back and forwards along the near edge of a wood, when we beheld a multitude of people rapidly advancing, and in a few minutes they surrounded the mouth of the pit. It was about the very end of the hay-harvest—and many ropes that had been employed that very day in the leading of the hay of the Landlord of the Inn, who was also an extensive farmer, were tied together to the length of at least twenty fathom. Hope was quite dead—but her work is often done by Despair. For a while there was confusion all round the pit-mouth, but with a white fixed face and glaring eyes, Lawrie Logan advanced to the very brink, with the rope bound in many firm folds around him, and immediately behind him stood his grey-headed father, unbonneted, just as he had risen from a prayer. "Is't my ain father that's gaun to help me to gang doun to bring up Willie's body? O! merciful God, what a judgment is this! Father—father—Oh! lie doun at some distance awa frae the sicht o' this place. Robin Alison, and Gabriel Strang, and John Borland 'ill haud the ropes firm and safe. O, father—father—lie doun, a bit apart frae the crowd; and have mercy upon him—O thou, great God, have mercy upon him!" But the old man kept his place; and the only one son who now survived to him disappeared within the jaws of the same murderous pit, and was lowered slowly down, nearer and nearer to his little brother's corpse. They had spoken to him of foul air, of which to breathe is death, but he had taken his resolution, and not another word had been said to shake it. And now, for a short time, there was no weight at the line, except that of its own length. It was plain that he had reached the bottom of the pit. Silent was all that congregation, as if assembled in divine worship. Again, there was a weight at the rope, and in a minute or two, a voice was heard far down

the pit that spread a sort of wild hope—else, why should it have spoken at all—and lo! the child—not like one of the dead—clasped in the arms of his brother, who was all covered with dust and blood. "Fall down on your knees—in the face o' heaven, and sing praises to God, for my brother is yet alive!"

During that Psalm, father, mother, and both their sons—the rescuer and the rescued—and their sweet cousin too, Annie Raeburn, the orphan, were lying embraced in speechless—almost senseless trances; for the agony of such a deliverance was more than could well by mortal creatures be endured.

The child himself was the first to tell how his life had been miraculously saved. A few shrubs had for many years been growing out of the inside of the pit, almost as far down as the light could reach, and among them had he been entangled in his descent, and held fast. For days, and weeks, and months, after that deliverance, few persons visited Logan Braes, for it was thought that old Laurence's brain had received a shock from which it might never recover; but the trouble that tried him subsided, and the inside of the house was again quiet as before, and its hospitable door open to all the neighbours.

Never forgetful of his primal duties had been that bold youth—but too apt to forget the many smaller ones that are wrapt round a life of poverty like invisible threads, and that cannot be broken violently or carelessly, without endangering the calm consistency of all its ongoings, and ultimately causing perhaps great losses, errors, and distress. He did not keep evil society—but neither did he shun it: and having a pride in feats of strength and activity, as was natural to a stripling whose corporeal faculties could not be excelled, he frequented all meetings where he was likely to fall in with worthy competitors, and in such trials of power, by degrees acquired a character for recklessness, and even violence, of which prudent men prognosticated evil, and that sorely disturbed his parents, who were, in their quiet retreat, lovers of all peace. With what wonder and admiration did all the Manse-boys witness and hear reported the feats of Lawrie Logan! It was he who, in pugilistic combat, first vanquished Black King Carey the Egyptian, who travelled the country with two wives and a waggon of Staffordshire pottery, and had struck the "Yokel,"

as he called Lawrie, in the midst of all the tents on Leddrie Green, at the great annual Baldernoch fair. Six times did the bare and bronzed Egyptian bite the dust—nor did Lawrie Logan always stand against the blows of one whose provincial fame was high in England, as the head of the Rough-and-Ready School. Even now—as in an ugly dream—we see the combatants alternately prostrate, and returning to the encounter, covered with mire and blood. All the women left the Green, and the old men shook their heads at such unchristian work; but Lawrie Logan did not want backers in the shepherds and the ploughmen, to see fair play against all the attempts of the Showmen and the Newcastle horse-cowpers, who laid their money thick on the King; till a right-hander in the pit of the stomach, which had nearly been the gypsy's everlasting quietus, gave the victory to Lawrie, amid acclamations that would have fitlier graced a triumph in a better cause. But that day was an evil day to all at Logan Braes. A recruiting sergeant got Lawrie into the tent, over which floated the colours of the 42d Regiment, and in the intoxication of victory, whisky, and the bagpipe, the young champion was as fairly enlisted into his Majesty's service, as ever young girl, without almost knowing it, was married at Gretna Green; and as the 42d were under orders to sail in a week, gold could not have bought off such a man, and Lawrie Logan went on board a transport.

Logan Braes was not the same place—indeed, the whole parish seemed altered—after Lawrie was gone, and our visits were thenceforth anything but cheerful ones, going by turns to inquire for Willie, who seemed to be pining away—not in any deadly disease, but just as if he himself knew, that without ailing much he was not to be a long liver. Yet nearly two years passed on, and all that time the principle of life had seemed like a flickering flame within him, that when you think it expiring or expired, streams up again with surprising brightness, and continues to glimmer even steadily with a protracted light. Every week—nay, almost every day, they feared to lose him—yet there he still was at morning and evening prayers. The third spring after the loss of his brother was remarkably mild, and breathing with west-winds that came softened over many woody miles from the sea. He seemed stronger, and more cheerful, and expressed a wish that

the Manse-boys, and some others of his companions, would come to Logan Braes, and once again celebrate May-day. There we all sat at the long table, and both parents did their best to look cheerful during the feast. Indeed, all that had once been harsh and forbidding in the old man's looks and manners, was now softened down by the perpetual yearnings at his heart towards "the distant far and absent long," nor less towards him that peaceful and pious child, whom every hour he saw, or thought he saw, awaiting a call from the eternal voice. Although sometimes sadness fell across us like a shadow, yet the hours passed on as May-day hours should do; and what with our many-toned talk and laughter, the cooing of the pigeons on the roof, and the twittering of the swallows beneath the eaves, and the lark-songs ringing like silver bells over all the heavens, it seemed a day that ought to bring good tidings—or, the Soldier himself returning from the wars to bless the eyes of his parents once more, so that they might die in peace. "Heaven hold us in its keeping, for there's his wraith!" ejaculated Annie Raeburn. "It passed before the window, and my Lawrie, I now know, is with the dead!"—Bending his stately head beneath the lintel of the door, in the dress, and with the bearing of a soldier, Lawrie Logan stepped again across his father's threshold, and, ere he well uttered "God be with you all!" Willie was within his arms, and on his bosom. His father and his mother rose not from their chairs, but sat still, with faces like ashes. But we boys could not resist our joy, and shouted his name aloud —while Luath, from his sleep in the corner, leapt on his master breast-high, and whining his dumb delight, frisked round him as of yore, when impatient to snuff the dawn on the hill-side. "Let us go out and play," said a boy's voice, and issuing somewhat seriously into the sunshine, we left the family within to themselves, and then walked away, without speaking, down to the Bridge.

After the lapse of an hour or more, and while we were all considering whether or no we should return to the house, the figure of Annie Raeburn was seen coming down the brae towards the party, in a way very unlike her usual staid and quiet demeanour, and stopping at some distance, to beckon with her hand more particularly, it was thought, on ourselves, as we stood a few yards apart from the rest. "Willie is

worse," were the only words she said, as we hastened back together; and on entering the room, we found the old man uncertainly pacing the floor by himself, but with a composed countenance. "He expressed a wish to see you—but he is gone!" We followed into Willie's small bedroom and study, and beheld him already *laid out*, and his mother sitting as calmly beside him as if she were watching his sleep. "Sab not sae sair, Lawrie—God was gracious to let him live to this day, that he micht dee in his brither's arms."

The sun has mounted high in heaven, while thus we have been dreaming away the hours—a dozen miles at least have we slowly wandered over, since morning, along pleasant by-paths, where never dust lay, or from gate to gate of pathless enclosures, a trespasser fearless of those threatening nonentities, spring-guns. There is the turnpike road—the great north and south road—for it is either the one or the other, according to the airt towards which you choose to turn your face. Behold a little Wayside Inn, neatly thatched, and with white-washed front, and sign-board hanging from a tree, on which are painted the figures of two jolly gentlemen, one in kilts and the other in breeches, shaking hands cautiously across a running brook. The meal of all meals is a paulo-post-meridian breakfast. The rosiness of the combs of these strapping hens is good augury;—hark, a cackle from the barn—another egg is laid—and chanticleer, stretching himself up on claw-tip, and clapping his wings of the bonny beaten gold, crows aloud to his sultana till the welkin rings. "Turn to the left, sir, if you please," quoth a comely matron; and we find ourselves snugly seated in an arm-chair, not wearied, but to rest willing, while the clock ticks pleasantly, and we take no note of time but by its gain; for here is our journal, in which we shall put down a few jottings for May-Day. Three boiled eggs—one to each penny-roll—are sufficient, under any circumstances, along with the same number fried with mutton ham, for the breakfast of a Gentleman and a Tory. Nor do we remember—when tea-cups have been on a proper scale, ever to have wished to go beyond the Golden Rule of Three. In politics, we confess that we are rather ultra; but in all things else we love moderation. "Come in, my bonny little lassie—ye needna keep keekin in that gate fra ahint the door"—and in a few minutes the curly-pated prattler is mur-

muring on our knee. The sonsy wife, well-pleased with the sight, and knowing from our kindness to children, that we are on the same side of politics with her gudeman—Ex-sergeant in the Black Watch, and once Orderly to Garth himself—brings out her ain bottle from the spence—a hollow square, and green as emerald. Bless the gurgle of its honest mouth! With prim lips mine hostess kisses the glass, previously letting fall a not inelegant curtsy—for she had, we now learned, been a lady's maid in her youth to one who is indeed a lady, all the time her lover was abroad in the army, in Egypt, Ireland, and the West Indies, and Malta, and Guernsey, Sicily, Portugal, Holland, and, we think she said, Corfu. One of the children has been sent to the field, where her husband is sowing barley, to tell him that there is fear lest dinner cool; and the mistress now draws herself up in pride of his noble appearance, as the stately Highlander salutes us with the respectful but bold air of one who has seen some service at home and abroad. Never knew we a man make other than a good bow, who had partaken freely in a charge of bayonets.

Shenstone's lines about always meeting the warmest welcome in an inn, are very natural and tender—as most of his compositions are, when he was at all in earnest. For our own part, we cannot complain of ever meeting any other welcome than a warm one, go where we may; for we are not obtrusive, and where we are not either liked, or loved, or esteemed, or admired (that last is a strong word, yet we all have our admirers), we are exceeding chary of the light of our countenance. But at an inn, the only kind of welcome that is indispensable, is a civil one. When that is not forthcoming, we shake the dust, or the dirt, off our feet, and pursue our journey, well assured that a few milestones will bring us to a humaner roof. Incivility and surliness have occasionally given us opportunities of beholding rare celestial phenomena—meteors—falling and shooting stars—the Aurora Borealis, in her shifting splendours—haloes round the moon, variously bright as the rainbow—electrical arches forming themselves on the sky in a manner so wondrously beautiful, that we should be sorry to hear them accounted for by philosophers—one-half of the horizon blue, and without a cloud, and the other driving tempestuously like the sea-foam, with waves

mountain-high—and divinest show of all for a solitary night-wandering man, who has anything of a soul at all, far and wide, and high up into the gracious heavens, Planets and Stars all burning as if their urns were newly fed with light, not twinkling as they do in a dewy or a vapoury night, although then, too, are the softened or veiled luminaries beautiful—but large, full, and free over the whole firmament—a galaxy of shining and unanswerable arguments in proof of the Immortality of the Soul.

The whole world is improving ; nor can there be a pleasanter proof of that than this very wayside inn—ycleped the Salutation. What a miserable pot-house it was long ago, with a rusty-hinged door, that would neither open nor shut—neither let you out nor in—immovable and intractable to foot or hand—or all at once, when you least expected it to yield, slamming to with a bang ; a constant puddle in front during rainy weather, and heaped up dust in dry—roof partly thatched, partly slated, partly tiled, and partly open to the elements, with its naked rafters. Broken windows repaired with an old petticoat, or a still older pair of breeches, and walls that had always been plastered and better plastered and worse plastered, in frosty weather—all labour in vain, as crumbling patches told, and variegated streaks, and stains of dismal ochre, meanest of all colours, and still symptomatic of want, mismanagement, bankruptcy, and perpetual flittings from a tenement that was never known to have paid any rent. Then what a pair of drunkards were old Saunders and his spouse ! Yet never once were they seen drunk on a Sabbath or a fast-day—regular kirk-goers, and attentive observers of ordinances. They had not very many children, yet, pass the door when you might, you were sure to hear a squall or a shriek, or the ban of the mother, or the smacking of the palm of the hand on the part of the enemy easiest of access ; or you saw one of the ragged fiends pursued by a parent round the corner, and brought back by the hair of the head till its eyes were like those of a Chinese. Now, what decency—what neatness—what order—in this household—this private public ! into which customers step like neighbours on a visit, and are served with a heartiness and goodwill that deserve the name of hospitality, for they are gratuitous, and can only be repaid in kind. A limited prospect does that latticed win-

dow command—and the small panes cut objects into too many parts—little more than the breadth of the turnpike road, and a hundred yards of the same, to the north and to the south, with a few budding hedgerows, half-a-dozen trees, and some green braes. Yet could we sit and moralise, and intellectualise, for hours at this window, nor hear the striking clock.

There trips by a blooming maiden of middle degree, all alone—the more's the pity—yet perfectly happy in her own society, and one we venture to say who never received a love-letter, valentines excepted, in all her innocent days.—A fat man sitting by himself in a gig! somewhat red in the face, as if he had dined early, and not so sure of the road as his horse, who has drunk nothing but a single pailful of water, and is anxious to get to town that he may be rubbed down, and see oats once more.—Scamper away, ye joyous schoolboys, and, for your sake, may that cloud breathe forth rain and breeze, before you reach the burn, which you seem to fear may run dry before you can see the Pool where the two-pounders lie.—Methinks we know that old woman, and of the first novel we write she shall be the heroine.—Ha! a brilliant bevy of mounted maidens, in riding-habits, and Spanish hats, with "swaling feathers"—sisters, it is easy to see, and daughters of one whom we either loved, or thought we loved; but now they say she is fat and vulgar, is the devil's own scold, and makes her servants and her husband lead the lives of slaves. All that we can say is, that once on a time it was *tout une autre chose;* for a smaller foot, a slimmer ankle, a more delicate waist, arms more lovely, reposing in their gracefulness beneath her bosom, tresses of brighter and more burnished auburn—such starlike eyes, thrilling without seeking to reach the soul—But phoo! phoo! phoo! she married a jolter-headed squire with two thousand acres, and, in self-defence, has grown fat, vulgar, and a scold.—There is a Head for a painter! and what perfect peace and placidity all over the Blind Man's countenance! He is not a beggar although he lives on alms—those sightless orbs ask not for charity, nor yet those withered hands, as, staff-supported, he stops at the kind voice of the traveller, and tells his story in a few words. On the ancient Dervise moves, with his long silvery hair, journeying contentedly in darkness towards the eternal light.—A gang of gypsies! with their numerous assery laden with horn-

spoons, pots, and pans, and black-eyed children. We should not be surprised to read some day in the newspapers, that the villain who leads the van had been executed for burglary, arson, and murder. That is the misfortune of having a bad physiognomy, a sidelong look, a scarred cheek, and a cruel grin about the muscles of the mouth; to say nothing about rusty hair protruding through the holes of a brown hat, not made for the wearer—long, sinewy arms, all of one thickness, terminating in huge, hairy, horny hands, chiefly knuckles and nails—a shambling gait, notwithstanding that his legs are finely proportioned, as if the night prowler were cautious not to be heard by the sleeping house, nor to awaken—so noiseless his stealthy advances—the unchained mastiff in his kennel.

But, hark! the spirit-stirring music of fife and drum! A whole regiment of soldiers on their march to replace another whole regiment of soldiers—and that is as much as we can be expected to know about their movements. Food for the cannon's mouth; but the maw of war has been gorged and satiated, and the glittering soap-bubbles of reputation, blown by windy-cheeked Fame from the bole of her pipe, have all burst as they have been clutched by the hands of tall fellows in red raiment, and with feathers on their heads, just before going to lie down on what is called the bed of honour. Melancholy indeed to think, that all these fine, fierce, ferocious, fire-eaters are doomed, but for some unlooked-for revolution in the affairs of Europe and the world, to die in their beds! Yet there is some comfort in thinking of the composition of a Company of brave defenders of their country. It is, we shall suppose, Seventy strong. Well, jot down three ploughmen, genuine clodhoppers, chaw-bacons *sans peur et sans reproche*, except that the overseers of the parish were upon them with orders of affiliation; add one shepherd, who made contradictory statements about the number of the spring lambs, and in whose house had been found during winter certain fleeces, for which no ingenuity could account; a laird's son, long known by the name of the Neerdoweel; a Man of tailors, forced to accept the bounty-money during a protracted strike—not dungs they, but flints all the nine; a barber, like many a son of genius, ruined by his wit, and who, after being driven from pole to pole, found refuge in the army at last; a bankrupt

butcher, once a bully, and now a poltroon; two of the Seven Young Men—all that now survive—impatient of the drudgery of the compting-house, and the injustice of the age—but they, we believe, are in the band—the triangle and the serpent; twelve cotton-spinners at the least; six weavers of woollens; a couple of colliers from the bowels of the earth; and a score of miscellaneous rabble—flunkies long out of place, and unable to live on their liveries—felons acquitted, or that have dreed their punishment—picked men from the shilling galleries of playhouses—and the élite of the refuse and sweepings of the jails. Look how all the rogues and reprobates march like one man! Alas! was it of such materials that our conquering army was made?—were such the heroes of Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo?

Why not, and what then? Heroes are but men after all. Men, as men go, are the materials of which heroes are made; and recruits in three years ripen into veterans. Cowardice in one campaign is disciplined into courage, fear into valour. In presence of the enemy, pickpockets become patriots—members of the swell mob volunteer on forlorn hopes, and step out from the ranks to head the storm. Lord bless you! have you not studied sympathy and *l'esprit de corps?* An army fifty thousand strong consists, we shall suppose, in equal portions of saints and sinners; and saints and sinners are all English, Irish, Scottish. What wonder, then, that they drive all resistance to the devil, and go on from victory to victory, keeping all the cathedrals and churches in England hard at work with all their organs, from Christmas to Christmas, blowing *Te Deum?* You must not be permitted too curiously to analyse the composition of the British army or the British navy. Look at them, think of them as Wholes, with Nelson or Wellington the head, and in one slump pray God to bless the defenders of the throne, the hearth, and the altar.

The baggage-waggons halt, and some refreshment is sent for to the women and children. Ay, creatures not far advanced in their teens are there—a year or two ago, at school or service, happy as the day was long, now mothers, with babies at their breasts—happy still perhaps; but that pretty face is woefully wan—that hair did not use to be so dishevelled—and bony, and clammy, and blue-veined is the hand that lay so white, and warm, and smooth in the grasp of the seducer.

Yet she thinks she is his wife; and, in truth, there is a ring on her marriage-finger. But, should the regiment embark, so many women, and no more, are suffered to go with a company; and, should one of the lots not fall on her, she may take of her husband an everlasting farewell.

The Highflier Coach! carrying six in, and twelve outsides —driver and guard excluded—rate of motion eleven miles an hour, with stoppages. Why, in the name of Heaven, are all people nowadays in such haste and hurry? Is it absolutely necessary that one and all of this dozen and a half Protestants and Catholics—alike anxious for emancipation—should be at a particular place, at one particular moment of time out of the twenty-four hours given to man for motion and for rest? Confident are we that that obese elderly gentleman beside the coachman—whose ample rotundity is encased in that antique and almost obsolete invention, a spenser—needed not to have been so carried in a whirlwind to his comfortable home. Scarcely is there time for pity as we behold an honest man's wife, pale as putty in the face at a tremendous swing, or lounge, or lurch of the Highflier, holding like grim death to the balustrades. But umbrellas, parasols, plaids, shawls, bonnets, and great-coats with as many necks as Hydra—the Pile of Life has disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the faint bugle tells that already it has spun and reeled onwards a mile on its destination.

But here comes a vehicle at a more rational pace. Mercy on us—a hearse and six horses returning leisurely from a funeral! Not improbable that the person who has just quitted it, had never, till he was a corpse, got higher than a single-horse Chay—yet no fewer than half-a-dozen hackneys must be hired for his dust. But clear the way! "Hurra! hurra! he rides a race, 'tis for a thousand pound!" Another, and another, and another—all working away with legs and knees, arms and shoulders, on cart-horses in the Brooze—the Brooze! The hearse-horses take no sort of notice of the cavalry of cart and plough, but each in turn keeps its snorting nostrils deep plunged in the pail of meal and water—for well may they be thirsty—the kirkyard being far among the hills, and the roads not yet civilised. "May I ask, friend," addressing ourself to the hearseman, "whom you have had inside?" "Only Dr Sandilands, sir—if you are going my way, you may have a

lift for a dram!" We had always thought there was a superstition in Scotland against marrying in the month of May; but it appears that people are wedded and bedded in that month too—some in warm sheets—and some in cold—cold—cold—dripping damp as the grave.

But we must up, and off. Not many gentlemen's houses in the parish—that is to say, old family seats; for of modern villas, or boxes, inhabited by persons imagining themselves gentlemen, and, for anything we know to the contrary, not wholly deceived in that belief, there is rather too great an abundance. Four family seats, however, there certainly are, of sufficient antiquity to please a lover of the olden time; and of those four, the one which we used to love best to look at was — The Mains. No need to describe it in many words. A Hall on a river-side, embosomed in woods—holms and meadows winding away in front, with their low thick hedgerows and stately single trees—on—on—on—as far as the eye can reach, a crowd of grove-tops—elms chiefly, or beeches—and a beautiful boundary of blue hills. "Good-day, Sergeant Stewart! farewell, Ma'am—farewell!" And in half an hour we are sitting in the moss-house at the edge of the outer garden, and gazing up at the many-windowed grey walls of the Mains, and its high steep-ridged roof, discoloured by the weather-stains of centuries. "The taxes on such a house," quod Sergeant Stewart, "are of themselves enough to ruin a man of moderate fortune—so the Mains, sir, has been uninhabited for a good many years." But he had been speaking to one who knew far more about the Mains than he could do—and who was not sorry that the Old Place was allowed to stand, undisturbed by any rich upstart, in the venerable silence of its own decay. And this is the moss-house that we helped to build with our own hands, at least to hang the lichen tapestry, and stud the cornice with shells! We were one of the paviers of that pebbled floor—and that bright scintillating piece of spar, the centre of the circle, came all the way from Derbyshire in the knapsack of a geologist, who died a Professor. It is strange the roof has not fallen in long ago; but what a slight ligature will often hold together a heap of ruins from tumbling into nothing! The old moss-house, though somewhat decrepit, is alive; and, if these swallows don't take care, they will be stunning themselves against our face, jerk-

ing out and in, through door and window, twenty times in a minute. Yet with all that twittering of swallows—and with all that frequent crowing of a cock—and all that cawing of rooks—and cooing of doves—and lowing of cattle along the holms—and bleating of lambs along the braes—it is nevertheless a pensive place; and here sit we like a hermit, world-sick, and to be revived only by hearkening in the solitude to the voices of other years.

What more mournful thought than that of a Decayed Family—a high-born race gradually worn out, and finally ceasing to be! The remote ancestors of this House were famous men of war—then some no less famous statesmen—then poets and historians—then minds still of fine, but of less energetic mould—and last of all, the mystery of madness breaking suddenly forth from spirits that seemed to have been especially formed for profoundest peace. There were three sons and two daughters, undegenerate from the ancient stateliness of the race—the oldest on his approach to manhood erect as the young cedar, that seems conscious of being destined one day to be the tallest tree in the woods. The twin-sisters were ladies indeed! Lovely as often are the low-born, no maiden ever stepped from her native cottage-door, even in a poet's dream, with such an air as that with which those fair beings walked along their saloons and lawns. Their beauty no one could at all describe—and no one beheld it who did not say that it transcended all that imagination had been able to picture of angelic and divine. As the sisters were, so were the brothers—distinguished above all their mates conspicuously, and beyond all possibility of mistake; so that strangers could single them out at once as the heirs of beauty, that, according to veritable pictures and true traditions, had been an unalienable gift from nature to that family ever since it bore the name. For the last three generations none of that house had ever reached even the meridian of life—and those of whom we now speak had from childhood been orphans. Yet how joyous and free were they one and all, and how often from this cell did evening hear their holy harmonies, as the Five united together with voice, harp, and dulcimer, till the stars themselves rejoiced!—One morning, Louisa, who loved the dewy dawn, was met bewildered in her mind, and perfectly astray—with no symptom of having been suddenly

alarmed or terrified—but with an unrecognising smile, and eyes scarcely changed in their expression, although they knew not—but rarely—on whom they looked. It was but a few months till she died—and Adelaide was laughing carelessly on her sister's funeral day—and asked why mourning should be worn at a marriage, and a plumed hearse sent to take away the bride. Fairest of God's creatures! can it be that thou art still alive? Not with cherubs smiling round thy knees—not walking in the free realms of earth and heaven with thy husband—the noble youth, who loved thee from thy childhood when himself a child; but oh! that such misery can be beneath the sun—shut up in some narrow cell perhaps—no one knows where—whether in this thy native kingdom, or in some foreign land—with those hands manacled—a demon-light in eyes once most angelical—and ringing through undistinguishable days and nights imaginary shriekings and yellings in thy poor distracted brain!—Down went the ship with all her crew in which Percy sailed;—the sabre must have been in the hand of a skilful swordsman that in one of the Spanish battles hewed Sholto down; and the gentle Richard, whose soul—while he possessed it clearly—was for ever among the sacred books, although too long he was as a star vainly sought for in a cloudy region, yet did for a short time starlike reappear—and on his death-bed he knew us, and the other mortal creatures weeping beside him, and that there was One who died to save sinners.

Let us away—let us away from this overpowering place—and make our escape from such unendurable sadness. Is this fit celebration of merry May-day? Is this the spirit in which we ought to look over the bosom of the earth, all teeming with buds and flowers just as man's heart should be teeming—and why not ours—with hopes and joys? Yet beautiful as this May-day is—and all the country round which it so tenderly illumines, we came not hither, a solitary pilgrim from our distant home, to indulge ourself in a joyful happiness. No, hither came we purposely to mourn among the scenes which in boyhood we seldom beheld through tears. And therefore have we chosen the gayest day of all the year, when all life is rejoicing, from the grasshopper among our feet to the lark in the cloud. Melancholy, and not mirth, doth he

hope to find, who after a life of wandering—and maybe not without sorrow—comes back to gaze on the banks and braes whereon, to his eyes, once grew the flowers of Paradise. Flowers of Paradise are ye still—for, praise be to Heaven! the sense of beauty is still strong within us—and methinks we could feel the beauty of this scene though our heart were broken.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER I.

We have often exposed the narrowness and weakness of that dogma, so pertinaciously adhered to by persons of cold hearts and limited understandings, that Religion is not a fit theme for poetical genius, and that Sacred Poetry is beyond the powers of uninspired man. We do not know that the grounds on which that dogma stands have ever been formally stated by any writer but Samuel Johnson; and therefore with all respect, nay, veneration, for his memory, we shall now shortly examine his statement, which, though, as we think, altogether unsatisfactory and sophistical, is yet a splendid specimen of false reasoning, and therefore worthy of being exposed and overthrown. Dr Johnson was not often utterly wrong in his mature and considerate judgments respecting any subject of paramount importance to the virtue and happiness of mankind. He was a good and wise being; but sometimes he did grievously err; and never more so than in his vain endeavour to exclude from the province of poetry its noblest, highest, and holiest domain. Shut the gates of Heaven against Poetry, and her flights along this earth will be feebler and lower,—her wings clogged and heavy by the attraction of matter,—and her voice—like that of the caged lark, so different from its hymning when lost to sight in the sky—will fail to call forth the deepest responses from the sanctuary of our spirit.

"Let no pious ear be offended," says Johnson, "if I advance, in opposition to many authorities, that poetical devotion cannot often please. The doctrines of religion may indeed be defended in a didactic poem; and he who has the happy power of arguing in verse, will not lose it because his subject is sacred. A poet may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and

praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside. The subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to piety; that of the description is not God, but the works of God. Contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer.

"The essence of poetry is invention; such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights. The topics of devotion are few, and being few are universally known: but few as they are, they can be made no more; they can receive no grace from novelty of sentiment, and very little from novelty of expression. Poetry pleases by exhibiting an idea more grateful in the mind than things themselves afford. This effect proceeds from the display of those parts of nature which attract, and the concealment of those that repel, the imagination; but religion must be shown as it is; suppression and addition equally corrupt it; and such as it is, it is known already. From poetry the reader justly expects, and from good poetry always obtains, the enlargement of his comprehension and the elevation of his fancy; but this is rarely to be hoped by Christians from metrical devotion. Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted; Infinity cannot be amplified; Perfection cannot be improved.

"The employments of pious meditation are *faith*, *thanksgiving*, *repentance*, and *supplication*. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being without passions, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy.

"Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself. All that pious verse can do is to help the memory and delight the ear, and for these purposes it may be very useful; but it supplies nothing

to the mind. The ideas of Christian Theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere."

Here Dr Johnson confesses that sacred subjects are not unfit—that they are fit—for didactic and descriptive poetry. Now, this is a very wide and comprehensive admission; and being a right, and natural, and just admission, it cannot but strike the thoughtful reader at once as destructive of the great dogma by which Sacred Poetry is condemned. The doctrines of Religion may be defended, he allows, in a didactic poem—and, pray, how can they be defended unless they are also expounded? And how can they be expounded without being steeped, as it were, in religious feeling? Let such a poem be as didactic as can possibly be imagined, still it must be pervaded by the very spirit of religion—and that spirit, breathing throughout the whole, must also be frequently expressed, vividly, and passionately, and profoundly, in particular passages; and if so, must it not be, in the strictest sense, a Sacred poem?

"But," says Dr Johnson, "the subject of the disputation is not piety, but the motives to picty." Why introduce the word "disputation," as if it characterised justly and entirely all didactic poetry? And who ever heard of an essential distinction between piety, and motives to piety? Mr James Montgomery, in a very excellent Essay prefixed to that most interesting collection, "The Christian Poet," well observes, that "motives to piety must be of the *nature* of picty, otherwise they could never incite to it—the precepts and sanctions of the Gospel might as well be denied to be any part of the Gospel." And, for our own parts, we scarcely know what piety is, separated from its motives—or how, so separated, it could be expressed in words at all.

With regard, again, to descriptive poetry, the argument, if argument it may be called, is still more lame and impotent. "A poet," it is said, "may describe the beauty and the grandeur of nature, the flowers of the spring and the harvests of autumn, the vicissitudes of the tide and the revolutions of the sky, and praise his Maker in lines which no reader shall lay aside." Most true he may; but then we are told, "the subject of the description is not God, but the works of God!"

Alas! what trifling—what miserable trifling is this! In the works of God, God is felt to be by us His creatures, whom He has spiritually endowed. We cannot look on them, even in our least elevated moods, without some shadow of love or awe; in our most elevated moods, we gaze on them with religion. By the very constitution of our intelligence, the effects speak of the cause. We are led by nature up to nature's God. The Bible is not the only revelation—there is another—dimmer but not less divine—for surely the works are as the words of God. No great poet, in describing the glories and beauties of the external world, is forgetful of the existence and attributes of the Most High. That thought, and that feeling, animate all his strains; and though he dare not to describe Him the Ineffable, he cannot prevent his poetry from being beautifully coloured by devotion, tinged by piety—in its essence it is religious.

It appears, then, that the qualifications or restrictions with which Dr Johnson is willing to allow that there may be didactic and descriptive sacred poetry, are wholly unmeaning, and made to depend on distinctions which have no existence.

Of narrative poetry of a sacred kind, Mr Montgomery well remarks, Johnson makes no mention, except it be implicated with the statement, that "the ideas of Christian Theology are too sacred for fiction—a sentiment more just than the admirers of Milton and Klopstock are willing to admit, without almost plenary indulgence in favour of these great, but not infallible authorities." Here Mr Montgomery expresses himself very cautiously—perhaps rather too much so—for he leaves us in the dark about his own belief. But this we do not hesitate to say, that though there is great danger of wrong being done to the ideas of Christian theology by poetry—a wrong which must be most painful to the whole inner being of a Christian; yet that there seems no necessity of such a wrong, and that a great poet, guarded by awe, and fear, and love, may move his wings unblamed, and to the glory of God, even among the most awful sanctities of his faith. These sanctities may be too awful for "fiction"—but fiction is not the word here, any more than disputation was the word there. Substitute for it the word poetry; and then, reflecting on that of Isaiah and of David, conversant with the

Holy of Holies, we feel that it need not profane those other sanctities, if it be, like its subject, indeed divine. True, that those bards were inspired—with them

——"the name
Of prophet and of poet was the same;"

but still, the power in the soul of a great poet, not in that highest of senses inspired, is, we may say it, of the same kind—inferior but in degree; for religion itself is always an inspiration. It is felt to be so in the prose of holy men—Why not in their poetry?

If these views be just, and we have expressed them "boldly, yet humbly"—all that remains to be set aside of Dr Johnson's argument is, "that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and man, cannot be poetical. Man admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer."

There is something very fine and true in the sentiment here; but the sentiment is only true in some cases, not in all. There are different degrees in the pious moods of the most pious spirit that ever sought communion with its God and its Saviour. Some of these are awe-struck and speechless. That line,

"Come, then, expressive silence, muse his praise!"

denies the power of poetry to be adequate to adoration, while the line itself is most glorious poetry. The temper even of our fallen spirits may be too divine for any words. Then the creature kneels mute before his Maker. But are there not other states of mind in which we feel ourselves drawn near to God, when there is no such awful speechlessness laid upon us—but when, on the contrary, our tongues are loosened, and the heart that burns within will speak? Will speak, perhaps, in song—in the inspiration of our piety breathing forth hymns and psalms—poetry indeed—if there be poetry on this earth? Why may we not say that the spirits of just men made perfect—almost perfect, by such visitations from heaven—will break forth—"rapt, inspired," into poetry which may be called holy, sacred, divine?

We feel as if treading on forbidden ground—and therefore speak reverently; but still we do not fear to say, that

between that highest state of contemplative piety which must be mute, down to that lowest state of the same feeling which evanishes and blends into mere human emotion as between creature and creature, there are infinite degrees of emotion which may be all embodied, without offence, in words—and if so embodied, with sincerity and humility, will be poetry, and poetry too of the most beautiful and affecting kind.

"Man, admitted to implore the mercy of his Creator, and plead the merits of his Redeemer, is already in a higher state than poetry can confer." Most true, indeed. But, though poetry did not confer that higher state, poetry may nevertheless, in some measure and to some degree, breathe audibly some of the emotions which constitute its blessedness; poetry may even help the soul to ascend to those celestial heights; because poetry may prepare it, and dispose it to expand itself, and open itself out to the highest and holiest influences of religion; for poetry there may be inspired directly from the word of God, using the language and strong in the spirit of that word—unexistent but for the Old and the New Testament.

We agree with Mr Montgomery, that the sum of Dr Johnson's argument amounts to this—that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, *cannot be poetical.* But here we at once ask ourselves, what does he mean by poetical? "The essence of poetry," he says, "is invention—such invention as, by producing something unexpected, surprises and delights." Here, again, there is confusion and sophistry. There is much high and noble poetry of which invention, such invention as is here spoken of, is not the essence. Devotional poetry is of that character. Who would require something unexpected and surprising in a strain of thanksgiving, repentance, or supplication? Such feelings as these, if rightly expressed, may exalt or prostrate the soul, without much—without any aid from the imagination—except in as far as the imagination will work under the power of every great emotion that does not absolutely confound mortal beings, and humble them down even below the very dust. There may be "no grace from novelty of sentiment," and "very little from novelty of expression"—to use Dr Johnson's words—for it is neither grace nor novelty that the spirit of the poet is seeking—"the strain we hear is of a

higher mood;" and "few as the topics of devotion may be," (but are they few?) and "universally known," they are all commensurate—nay, far more than commensurate, with the whole power of the soul—never can they become unaffecting while it is our lot to die;—even from the lips of ordinary men, the words that flow on such topics flow effectually, if they are earnest, simple, and sincere; but from the lips of genius, inspired by religion, who shall dare to say that, on such topics, words have not flowed that are felt to be poetry almost worthy of the Celestial Ardours around the Throne, and by their majesty to "link us to the radiant angels," than whom we were made but a little lower, and with whom we may, when time shall be no more, be equalled in heaven?

We do not hesitate to say, that Dr Johnson's doctrine of the *effect* of poetry is wholly false. If it do indeed please, by exhibiting an idea more grateful to the mind than things themselves afford, that is only because the things themselves are imperfect—more so than suits the aspirations of a spirit, always aspiring, because immortal, to a higher sphere—a higher order of being. But when God himself is, with all awe and reverence, made the subject of song—then it is the office—the sacred office of poetry—not to exalt the subject, but to exalt the soul that contemplates it. That poetry can do, else why does human nature glory in the "Paradise Lost?"

"Whatever is great, desirable, or tremendous, is comprised in the name of the Supreme Being. Omnipotence cannot be exalted—Infinity cannot be amplified—Perfection cannot be improved." Should not this go to prohibit all speech—all discourse—all sermons concerning the divine attributes? Immersed as they are in matter, our souls wax dull, and the attributes of the Deity are but as mere names. Those attributes cannot, indeed, be exalted by poetry. "The perfection of God cannot be improved"—nor was it worthy of so wise a man so to speak; but while the Creator abideth in His own incomprehensible Being, the creature, too willing to crawl blind and hoodwinked along the earth, like a worm, may be raised by the voice of the charmer, "some sweet singer of Israel," from his slimy track, and suddenly be made to soar on wings up into the ether.

Would Dr Johnson have declared the uselessness of Natural

Theology? On the same ground he must have done so, to preserve consistency in his doctrine. Do we, by exploring wisdom, and power, and goodness, in all animate and inanimate creation, exalt Omnipotence, amplify infinity, or improve perfection? We become ourselves exalted by such divine contemplations—by knowing the structure of a rose-leaf or of an insect's wing. We are reminded of what, alas! we too often forget, and exclaim, "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name!" And while science explores, may not poetry celebrate the glories and the mercies of our God?

The argument against which we contend gets weaker and weaker as it proceeds—the gross misconception of the nature of poetry on which it is founded becomes more and more glaring—the paradoxes, dealt out as confidently as if they were self-evident truths, more and more repulsive alike to our feelings and our understandings. "The employments of pious meditation are faith, thanksgiving, repentance, and supplication. Faith, invariably uniform, cannot be invested by fancy with decorations. Thanksgiving, though the most joyful of all holy effusions, yet addressed to a Being superior to us, is confined to a few modes, and is to be felt rather than expressed. Repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, is not at leisure for cadences and epithets. Supplication to men may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." What a vain attempt authoritatively to impose upon the common sense of mankind! Faith is not invariably uniform. To preserve it unwavering—unquaking—to save it from lingering or from sudden death—is the most difficult service to which the frail spirit—frail even in its greatest strength—is called every day—every hour—of this troubled, perplexing, agitating, and often most unintelligible life! "Liberty of will," says Jeremy Taylor, "is like the motion of a magnetic needle towards the north, full of trembling and uncertainty till it be fixed in the beloved point; it wavers as long as it is free, and is at rest when it can choose no more. It is humility and truth to allow to man this liberty; and, therefore, for this we may lay our faces in the dust, and confess that our dignity and excellence suppose misery, and are imperfection, but the instrument and capacity of all duty and all virtue." Happy he whose faith is finally "fixed in the beloved point!" But even of

that faith, what hinders the poet whom it has blessed to sing? While, of its tremblings, and veerings, and variations, why may not the poet, whose faith has experienced, and still may experience them all, breathe many a melancholy and mournful lay, assuaged, ere the close, by the descent of peace?

Thanksgiving, it is here admitted, is the "most joyful of all holy effusions;" and the admission is sufficient to prove that it cannot be "confined to a few modes." "Out of the fulness of the heart the tongue speaketh;" and though at times the heart will be too full for speech, yet as often even the coldest lips prove eloquent in gratitude—yea, the very dumb do speak—nor, in excess of joy, know the miracle that has been wrought upon them by the power of their own mysterious and high enthusiasm.

That "repentance, trembling in the presence of the Judge, should not be at leisure for cadences and epithets," is in one respect true; but nobody supposes that during such moments —or hours—poetry is composed; and surely when they have passed away, which they must do, and the mind is left free to meditate upon them, and to recall them as shadows of the past, there is nothing to prevent them from being steadily and calmly contemplated, and depictured in somewhat softened and altogether endurable light, so as to become proper subjects even of poetry—that is, proper subjects of such expression as human nature is prompted to clothe with all its emotions, as soon as they have subsided, after a swell or a storm, into a calm, either placid altogether, or still bearing traces of the agitation that has ceased, and have left the whole being self-possessed, and both capable and desirous of indulging itself in an after-emotion at once melancholy and sublime. Then, repentance will not only be "at leisure for cadences and epithets," but cadences and epithets will of themselves move harmonious numbers, and give birth, if genius as well as piety be there, to religious poetry. Cadences and epithets are indeed often sought for with care, and pains, and ingenuity; but they often come unsought; and never more certainly and more easily than when the mind recovers itself from some oppressive mood, and, along with a certain sublime sadness, is restored to the full possession of powers that had for a short severe season been overwhelmed, but afterwards look back, in very inspiration, on the feelings

that during their height were nearly unendurable, and then unfit for any outward and palpable form. The criminal trembling at the bar of an earthly tribunal, and with remorse and repentance receiving his doom, might, in like manner, be wholly unable to set his emotions to the measures of speech; but when recovered from the shock by pardon, or reprieve, or submission, is there any reason why he should not calmly recall the miseries and the prostration of spirit attendant on that hour, and give them touching and pathetic expression?

"Supplication to man may diffuse itself through many topics of persuasion; but supplication to God can only cry for mercy." And in that cry we say that there may be poetry; for the God of Mercy suffers his creatures to approach his throne in supplication, with words which they have learned when supplicating one another; and the feeling of being forgiven, which we are graciously permitted to believe may follow supplication, and spring from it, may vent itself in many various and most affecting forms of speech. Men will supplicate God in many other words besides those of doubt and of despair; hope will mingle with prayer; and hope, as it glows, and burns, and expands, will speak in poetry—else poetry there is none proceeding from any of our most sacred passions.

Dr Johnson says, "Of sentiments purely religious, it will be found that the most simple expression is the most sublime. Poetry loses its lustre and its power, because it is applied to the decoration of something more excellent than itself." Here he had in his mind the most false notions of poetry, which he had evidently imagined to be an art despising simplicity—whereas simplicity is its very soul. Simple expression, he truly says, is in religion most sublime—and why should not poetry be simple in its expression? Is it not always so—when the mood of mind it expresses is simple, concise, and strong, and collected into one great emotion? But he uses—as we see—the terms "lustre" and "decoration"—as if poetry necessarily, by its very nature, was always ambitious and ornate; whereas we all know, that it is often in all its glory direct and simple as the language of very childhood, and for that reason sublime.

With such false notions of poetry, it is not to be wondered at that Dr Johnson, enlightened man as he was, should have

concluded his argument with this absurdity—"The ideas of Christian theology are too simple for eloquence, too sacred for fiction, and too majestic for ornament; to recommend them by tropes and figures, is to magnify by a concave mirror the sidereal hemisphere." No. Simple as they are—on them have been bestowed, and by them awakened, the highest strains of eloquence—and here we hail the shade of Jeremy Taylor alone—one of the highest that ever soared from earth to heaven; sacred as they are, they have not been desecrated by the fictions—so to call them—of John Milton; majestic as are the heavens, their majesty has not been lowered by the ornaments that the rich genius of the old English divines has so profusely hung around them, like dewdrops glistening on the fruitage of the Tree of Life. Tropes and figures are nowhere more numerous and refulgent than in the Scriptures themselves, from Isaiah to St John; and, magnificent as are the "sidereal heavens" when the eye looks aloft, they are not to our eyes less so, nor less lovely, when reflected in the bosom of a still lake or the slumbering ocean.

This statement of facts destroys at once all Dr Johnson's splendid sophistry—splendid at first sight—but on closer inspection a mere haze, mist, or smoke, illuminated by an artificial lustre. How far more truly, and how far more sublimely, does Milton, "that mighty orb of song," speak of his own divine gift—the gift of Poetry! "These abilities are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, and are of power to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility; to allay the perturbation of the mind, and set the affections to a right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightiness, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of Martyrs and Saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapse of kingdoms and states from virtue and God's true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, and in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion, or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflections of men's thoughts from within; all these things, with a solid and treatable smoothness, to paint out and describe—

Teaching over the whole book of morality and virtue, through all instances of example, with such delight to those, especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon Truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed; that, whereas the paths of honesty and good life that appear now rugged and difficult, appear to all men easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed."

It is not easy to believe that no great broad lights have been thrown on the mysteries of men's minds since the days of the great poets, moralists, and metaphysicians of the ancient world. We seem to feel more profoundly than they—to see, as it were, into a new world. The things of that world are of such surpassing worth, that in certain awe-struck moods we regard them as almost above the province of Poetry. Since the revelation of Christianity, all moral thought has been sanctified by Religion. Religion has given it a purity, a solemnity, a sublimity, which, even among the noblest of the heathen, we shall look for in vain. The knowledge that shone but by fits and dimly on the eyes of Socrates and Plato, "that rolled in vain to find the light," has descended over many lands into "the huts where poor men lie"—and thoughts are familiar there, beneath the low and smoky roofs, higher far than ever flowed from the lips of Grecian sage meditating among the magnificence of his pillared temples. The whole condition and character of the Human Being, in Christian countries, has been raised up to a loftier elevation; and he may be looked at in the face without a sense of degradation, even when he wears the aspect of poverty and distress. Since that Religion was given us, and not before, has been felt the meaning of that sublime expression—The Brotherhood of Man.

Yet it is just as true that there is as much misery and suffering in Christendom—nay, far more of them all—than troubled and tore men's hearts during the reign of all those superstitions and idolatries. But with what different feelings is it all thought of—spoken of—looked at—alleviated—repented—expiated—atoned for—now! In the olden time, such was the prostration of the "million," that it was only when seen in high places that even Guilt and Sin were felt to be appalling;—Remorse was the privilege of Kings and Princes—and the Furies shook their scourges but before the

eyes of the high-born, whose crimes had brought eclipse across the ancestral glories of some ancient line.

But we now know that there is but one origin from which flow all disastrous issues, alike to the king and the beggar. It is sin that does "with the lofty equalise the low;" and the same deep-felt community of guilt and groans which renders Religion awful, has given to poetry in a lower degree something of the same character—has made it far more profoundly tender, more overpoweringly pathetic, more humane and thoughtful far, more humble as well as more high, like Christian Charity more comprehensive; nay, we may say, like Christian Faith, felt by those to whom it is given to be from on high; and if not utterly destroyed, darkened and miserably weakened by a wicked or vicious life.

We may affirm, then, that as human nature has been so greatly purified and elevated by the Christian Religion, Poetry, which deals with human nature in all its dearest and most intimate concerns, must have partaken of that purity and that elevation—and that it may now be a far holier and more sacred inspiration, than when it was fabled to be the gift of Apollo and the Muses. We may not circumscribe its sphere. To what cerulean heights shall not the wing of Poetry soar? Into what dungeon-gloom shall she not descend? If such be her powers and privileges, shall she not be the servant and minister of Religion?

If from moral fictions of life Religion be altogether excluded, then it would indeed be a waste of words to show that they must be worse than worthless. They must be, not imperfect merely, but false; and not false merely, but calumnious against human nature. The agonies of passion fling men down to the dust on their knees, or smite them motionless as stone statues, sitting alone in their darkened chambers of despair. But sooner or later, all eyes, all hearts, look for comfort to God. The coldest metaphysical analyst could not avoid *that*, in his sage enumeration of "each particular hair" that is twisted and untwisted by him into a sort of moral tie; and surely the impassioned and philosophical poet will not, dare not, for the spirit that is within him, exclude *that* from his elegies, his hymns, and his songs, which, whether mournful or exulting, are inspired by the life-long, life-deep conviction, that all the greatness of the present is but for the future—that

the praises of this passing earth are worthy of his lyre only because it is overshadowed by the eternal heavens.

But though the total exclusion of Religion from Poetry aspiring to be a picture of the life or soul of man, be manifestly destructive of its very essence—how, it may be asked, shall we set bounds to this spirit—how shall we limit it—measure it—and accustom it to the curb of critical control? If Religion be indeed all-in-all, and there are few who openly deny it, must we, nevertheless, deal with it only in allusion—hint it as if we were half afraid of its spirit, half ashamed—and cunningly contrive to save our credit as Christians, without subjecting ourselves to the condemnation of critics, whose scorn, even in this enlightened age, has—the more is the pity—even by men conscious of their genius and virtue, been feared as more fatal than death?

No: Let there be no compromise between false taste and true Religion. Better to be condemned by all the periodical publications in Great Britain than your own conscience. Let the dunce, with diseased spleen, who edits one obscure Review, revile and rail at you to his heart's discontent, in hollow league with his black-biled brother, who, sickened by your success, has long laboured in vain to edit another, still more unpublishable—but do you hold the even tenor of your way, assured that the beauty which nature, and the Lord of nature, have revealed to your eyes and your heart, when sown abroad will not be suffered to perish, but will have everlasting life. Your books—humble and unpretending though they be—yet here and there a page not uninspired by the spirit of Truth, and Faith, and Hope, and Charity—that is, by Religion—will be held up before the ingle light, close to the eyes of the pious patriarch, sitting with his children's children round his knees—nor will any one sentiment, chastened by that fire that tempers the sacred links that bind together the brotherhood of man, escape the solemn search of a soul, simple and strong in its Bible-taught wisdom, and happy to feel and own communion of holy thought with one unknown—even perhaps by name—who although dead yet speaketh—and, without superstition, is numbered among the saints of that lowly household.

He who knows that he writes in the fear of God and in the love of man, will not arrest the thoughts that flow from his

pen, because he knows that they may—will be—insulted and profaned by the name of cant, and he himself held up as a hypocrite. In some hands, ridicule is indeed a terrible weapon. It is terrible in the hands of indignant genius, branding the audacious forehead of falsehood or pollution. But ridicule in the hands either of cold-blooded or infuriated Malice, is harmless as a birch-rod in the palsied fingers of a superannuated beldam, who in her blear-eyed dotage has lost her school. The Bird of Paradise might float in the sunshine unharmed all its beautiful life long, although all the sportsmen of Cockaigne were to keep firing at the star-like plumage during the Christmas holydays of a thousand years.

We never are disposed not to enjoy a religious spirit in metrical composition, but when induced to suspect that it is not sincere; and then we turn away from the hypocrite, just as we do from a pious pretender in the intercourse of life. Shocking it is, indeed, to see "fools rush in where angels fear to tread;" nor have we words to express our disgust and horror at the sight of fools, not rushing in among those awful sanctities before which angels vail their faces with their wings, but mincing in, with red slippers and flowered dressing-gowns—would-be fashionables, with crow-quills in hands like those of milliners, and rings on their fingers—afterwards extending their notes into Sacred Poems for the use of the public—penny-a-liners, reporting the judgments of Providence as they would the proceedings of a police court.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER II.

The distinctive character of poetry, it has been said, and credited almost universally, is *to please*. That they who have studied the laws of thought and passion should have suffered themselves to be deluded by an unmeaning word is mortifying enough; but it is more than mortifying—it perplexes and confounds—to think that poets themselves, and poets too of the highest order, have declared the same degrading belief of what is the scope and tendency, the end and aim of their own divine art—forsooth, *to please!* Pleasure is no more the end of poetry, than it is the end of knowledge, or of virtue, or of religion, or of this world. The end of poetry is pleasure, delight, instruction, expansion, elevation, honour, glory, happiness here and hereafter, or it is nothing. Is the end of "Paradise Lost" to please? Is the end of Dante's Divine Comedy to please? Is the end of the Psalms of David to please? Or of the songs of Isaiah? Yet it is probable that poetry has often been injured or vitiated by having been written in the spirit of this creed. It relieved poets from the burden of their duty—from the responsibility of their endowments—from the conscience that is in genius. We suspect that this doctrine has borne especially hard on all sacred poetry, disinclined poets to devoting their genius to it—and consigned, if not to oblivion, to neglect, much of what is great in that magnificent walk. For if the masters of the Holy Harp are to strike it but to please—if their high inspirations are to be deadened and dragged down by the prevalent power of such a mean and unworthy aim—they will either be contented to awaken a few touching tones of "those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide"—unwilling to prolong and deepen them into the diapason of praise—or they will

deposit their lyre within the gloom of the sanctuary, and leave unawakened "the soul of music sleeping on its strings."

All arguments, or rather objections to, sacred poetry, dissolve as you internally look at them, like unabiding mist-shapes, or rather like imagined mirage where no mirage is, but the mind itself makes ocular deceptions for its own amusement. By sacred poetry is mostly meant Scriptural; but there are, and always have been, conceited and callous critics, who would exclude all religious feelings from poetry, and indeed from prose too, compendiously calling them all cant. Had such criticasters been right, all great nations would not have so gloried in their great bards. Poetry, it is clear, embraces all we can experience; and every high, impassioned, imaginative, intellectual, and moral state of being becomes religious before it passes away, provided it be left free to seek the empyrean, and not adstricted to the glebe by some severe slavery of condition, which destroys the desire of ascent by the same inexorable laws that palsy the power, and reconcile the toilers to the doom of the dust. If all the states of being that poetry illustrates do thus tend, of their own accord, towards religious elevation, all high poetry must be religious; and so it is, for its whole language is breathing of a life "above the smoke and stir of this dim spot which men call earth;" and the feelings, impulses, motives, aspirations, obligations, duties, privileges, which it shadows forth or embodies, enveloping them in solemn shade or attractive light, are all, directly or indirectly, manifestly or secretly, allied with the sense of the immortality of the soul, and the belief of a future state of reward and retribution. Extinguish that sense and that belief in a poet's soul, and he may hang up his harp.

Among the great living poets, Wordsworth is the one whose poetry is to us the most inexplicable—with all our reverence for his transcendent genius, we do not fear to say the most open to the most serious charges—on the score of its religion. From the first line of the "Lyrical Ballads" to the last of "The Excursion"—it is avowedly one system of thought and feeling, embracing his experiences of human life, and his meditations on the moral government of this world. The human heart—the human mind—the human soul—to use his

own fine words—is "the haunt and main region of his song." There are few, perhaps none of our affections—using that term in its largest sense—which have not been either slightly touched upon, or fully treated, by Wordsworth. In his poetry, therefore, we behold an image of what, to his eye, appears to be human life. Is there, or is there not, some great and lamentable defect in that image, marring both the truth and beauty of the representation? We think there is—and that it lies in his Religion.

In none of Wordsworth's poetry, previous to his "Excursion," is there any allusion made, except of the most trivial and transient kind, to Revealed Religion. He certainly cannot be called a Christian poet. The hopes that lie beyond the grave—and the many holy and awful feelings in which on earth these hopes are enshrined and fed, are rarely if ever part of the character of any of the persons—male or female—old or young—brought before us in his beautiful Pastorals. Yet all the most interesting and affecting ongoings of this life are exquisitely delineated—and innumerable of course are the occasions on which, had the thoughts and feelings of revealed religion been in Wordsworth's heart during the hours of inspiration—and he often has written like a man inspired—they must have found expression in his strains; and the personages, humble or high, that figure in his representations, would have been, in their joys or their sorrows, their temptations and their trials, Christians. But most assuredly this is not the case; the religion of this great Poet—in all his poetry published previous to "The Excursion"—is but the "Religion of the Woods."

In "The Excursion," his religion is brought forward—prominently and conspicuously—in many elaborate dialogues between Priest, Pedlar, Poet, and Solitary. And a very high religion it often is; but is it Christianity? No—it is not. There are glimpses given of some of the Christian doctrines; just as if the various philosophical disquisitions, in which the Poem abounds, would be imperfect without some allusion to the Christian creed. The interlocutors—eloquent as they all are—say but little on that theme; nor do they show—if we except the Priest—much interest in it—any solicitude; they may all, for anything that appears to the contrary, be deists.

Now, perhaps, it may be said that Wordsworth was deterred from entering on such a theme by the awe of his spirit. But there is no appearance of this having been the case in any one single passage in the whole poem. Nor could it have been the case with such a man—a man privileged, by the power God has bestowed upon him, to speak unto all the nations of the earth, on all themes, however high and holy, which the children of men can feel and understand. Christianity, during almost all their disquisitions, lay in the way of all the speakers, as they kept journeying among the hills,

> "On man, on nature, and on human life,
> Musing in Solitude!"

But they, one and all, either did not perceive it, or, perceiving it, looked upon it with a cold and indifferent regard, and passed by into the poetry breathing from the dewy woods, or lowering from the cloudy skies. Their talk is of "Palmyra central, in the desert," rather than of Jerusalem. On the mythology of the Heathen much beautiful poetry is bestowed, but none on the theology of the Christian.

Yet there is no subject too high for Wordsworth's muse. In the preface to "The Excursion," he says daringly—we fear too daringly,—

> "Urania, I shall need
> Thy guidance, or a greater muse, if such
> Descend to earth, or dwell in highest heaven!
> For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
> Deep—and aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
> To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
> All strength—all terror—single or in bands,
> That ever was put forth in personal form,
> Jehovah with his thunder, and the choir
> Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones;
> I passed them unalarm'd!"

Has the poet, who believes himself entitled to speak thus of the power and province given to him to put forth and to possess, spoken in consonance with such a strain, by avoiding, in part of the very work to which he so triumphantly appeals, the Christian Revelation? Nothing could have reconciled us to a burst of such—audacity—we use the word considerately

—but the exhibition of a spirit divinely imbued with the Christian faith. For what else, we ask, but the truths beheld by the Christian Faith, can be beyond those "personal forms," "beyond Jehovah," "the choirs of shouting angels," and the "empyreal thrones?"

This omission is felt the more deeply—the more sadly—from such introduction as there is of Christianity; for one of the books of "The Excursion" begins with a very long, and a very noble eulogy on the Church Establishment in England. How happened it that he who pronounced such eloquent panegyric—that they who so devoutly inclined their ear to imbibe it—should have been all contented with

> "That basis laid, these principles of faith
> Announced,"

and yet throughout the whole course of their discussions, before and after, have forgotten apparently that there was either Christianity or a Christian Church in the world?

We do not hesitate to say, that the thoughtful and sincere student of this great poet's works, must regard such omission—such inconsistency or contradiction—with more than the pain of regret; for there is no relief afforded to our defrauded hearts from any quarter to which we can look. A pledge has been given, that all the powers and privileges of a Christian poet shall be put forth and exercised for our behoof—for our delight and instruction; all other poetry is to sink away before the heavenly splendour; Urania, or a greater muse, is invoked; and after all this solemn, and more than solemn preparation made for our initiation into the mysteries, we are put off with a well-merited encomium on the Church of England, from Bishop to Curate inclusive; and though we have much fine poetry, and some high philosophy, it would puzzle the most ingenious to detect much, or any, Christian religion.

Should the opinion boldly avowed be challenged, we shall enter into further exposition and illustration of it; meanwhile, we confine ourselves to some remarks on one of the most elaborate tales of domestic suffering in "The Excursion." In the story of Margaret, containing, we believe, more than four hundred lines—a tolerably long poem in itself—though the whole and entire state of a poor deserted wife and mother's heart, for year after year of "hope deferred, that maketh the

heart sick," is described, or rather dissected, with an almost cruel anatomy—not one quivering fibre being left unexposed—all the fluctuating, and finally all the constant agitations laid bare and naked that carried her at last lingeringly to the grave—there is not—except one or two weak lines, that seem to have been afterwards purposely dropped in—one single syllable about Religion. Was Margaret a Christian?—Let the answer be yes—as good a Christian as ever kneeled in the small mountain chapel, in whose churchyard her body now waits for the resurrection. If she was—then the picture painted of her and her agonies, is a libel not only on her character, but on the character of all other poor Christian women in this Christian land. Placed as she was, for so many years, in the clutches of so many passions—she surely must have turned sometimes—ay, often, and often, and often, else had she sooner left the clay—towards her Lord and Saviour. But of such "comfort let no man speak," seems to have been the principle of Mr Wordsworth; and the consequence is, that this, perhaps the most elaborate picture he ever painted of any conflict within any one human heart, is, with all its pathos, repulsive to every religious mind—*that* being wanting without which the entire representation is vitiated, and necessarily false to nature—to virtue—to resignation—to life—and to death. These may seem strong words—but we are ready to defend them in the face of all who may venture to impugn their truth.

This utter absence of Revealed Religion, where it ought to have been all-in-all—for in such trials in real life it is all-in-all, or we regard the existence of sin or sorrow with repugnance—shocks far deeper feelings within us than those of taste, and throws over the whole poem to which the tale of Margaret belongs, an unhappy suspicion of hollowness and insincerity in that poetical religion, which at the best is a sorry substitute indeed for the light that is from heaven. Above all, it flings, as indeed we have intimated, an air of absurdity over the orthodox Church-of-Englandism—for once to quote a not inexpressive barbarism of Bentham—which every now and then breaks out either in passing compliment—amounting to but a bow—or in eloquent laudation, during which the poet appears to be prostrate on his knees. He speaks nobly of cathedrals, and minsters, and so forth, rev-

erendly adorning all the land; but in none—no, not one of the houses of the humble, the hovels of the poor into which he takes us—is the religion preached in those cathedrals and minsters, and chanted in prayer to the pealing organ, represented as the power that in peace supports the roof-tree, lightens the hearth, and is the guardian, the tutelary spirit of the lowly dwelling. Can this be right? Impossible. And when we find the Christian religion thus excluded from Poetry, otherwise as good as ever was produced by human genius, what are we to think of the Poet, and of the world of thought and feeling, fancy and imagination, in which he breathes, nor fears to declare to all men that he believes himself to be one of the order of the High Priests of nature?

Shall it be said, in justification of the poet, that he presents a very interesting state of mind, sometimes found actually existing, and does not pretend to present a model of virtue? —that there are miseries which shut some hearts against religion, sensibilities which, being too severely tried, are disinclined, at least at certain stages of their suffering, to look to that source for comfort?—that this is human nature, and the description only follows it?—that when "in peace and comfort" her best hopes were directed to "the God in heaven," and that her habit in that respect was only broken up by the stroke of her calamity, causing such a derangement of her mental power as should deeply interest the sympathies? —in short, that the poet is an artist, and that the privation of all comfort from religion completes the picture of her desolation?

Would that such defence were of avail! But of whom does the poet so pathetically speak?

> "Of one whose stock
> Of virtues bloom'd beneath this lowly roof.
> She was a woman of a steady mind,
> Tender and deep in her excess of love;
> Not speaking much—pleased rather with the joy
> Of her own thoughts. By some especial care
> Her temper had been framed, as if to make
> A Being who, by adding love to fear,
> Might live on earth a life of happiness.
> Her wedded partner lack'd not on his side
> The humble worth that satisfied her heart—

> Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
> Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
> That he was often seated at his loom
> In summer, ere the mower was abroad
> Among the dewy grass—in early spring,
> Ere the last star had vanish'd. They who pass'd
> At evening, from behind the garden fence
> Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply
> After his daily work, until the light
> Had fail'd, and every leaf and flower were lost
> In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
> In peace and comfort ; and a pretty boy
> Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven."

We are prepared by that character, so amply and beautifully drawn, to pity her to the utmost demand that may be made on our pity—to judge her leniently, even if in her desertion she finally give way to inordinate and incurable grief. But we are not prepared to see her sinking from depth to depth of despair, in wilful abandonment to her anguish, without oft-repeated and long-continued passionate prayers for support or deliverance from her trouble, to the throne of mercy. Alas! it is true that in our happiness our gratitude to God is too often more selfish than we think, and that in our misery it faints or dies. So is it even with the best of us—but surely not all life long—unless the heart has been utterly crushed—the brain itself distorted in its functions, by some calamity, under which nature's self gives way, and falls into ruins like a rent house when the last prop is withdrawn.

> " Nine tedious years
> From their first separation—nine long years
> She linger'd in unquiet widowhood—
> A wife and widow. Needs must it have been
> A sore heart-wasting."

It must indeed, and it is depicted by a master's hand. But even were it granted that sufferings, such as hers, might, in the course of nature, have extinguished all heavenly comfort —all reliance on God and her Saviour—the process and progress of such fatal relinquishment should have been shown, with all its struggles and all its agonies ; if the religion of one so good was so unavailing, its weakness should have

been exhibited and explained, that we might have known assuredly why, in the multitude of the thoughts within her, there was no solace for her sorrow, and how unpitying Heaven let her die of grief.

This tale, too, is the very first told by the Pedlar to the Poet, under circumstances of much solemnity, and with affecting note of preparation. It arises naturally from the sight of the ruined cottage near which they, by appointment, have met; the narrator puts his whole heart into it, and the listener is overcome by its pathos. No remark is made on Margaret's grief, except that

> "I turn'd aside in weakness, nor had power
> To thank him for the tale which he had told.
> I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall,
> Review'd that woman's sufferings; and it seem'd
> To comfort me, while, with a brother's love,
> I bless'd her in the impotence of grief.
> Then towards the cottage I return'd, and traced
> Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
> The sacred spirit of humanity,
> Which, 'mid the calm, oblivious tendencies
> Of nature—'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
> And silent overgrowings, still survived."

Such musings receive the Pedlar's approbation, and he says,—

> "My friend! enough to sorrow you have given.
> The purposes of wisdom ask no more.
> Be wise and cheerful, and no longer read
> The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
> She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here."

As the Poet, then, was entirely satisfied with the tale, so ought to be all readers. No hint is dropped that there was anything to blame in the poor woman's nine years' passion—no regret breathed that she had sought not, by means offered to all, for that peace of mind which passeth all understanding—no question asked, how it was that she had not communed with her own afflicted heart, over the pages of that Book where it is written, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!" The narrator had indeed said, that on revisiting her during her affliction,—

"Her humble lot of books,
Which in her cottage window, heretofore,
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves,
Lay scatter'd here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall."

But he does not mention the Bible.

What follows has always seemed to us of a questionable character :—

"I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silver'd o'er,
As once I pass'd, into my heart convey'd
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and look'd so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the griefs
The passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appear'd an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turn'd away,
And walk'd along my road in happiness."

These are fine lines ; nor shall we dare, in face of them, to deny the power of the beauty and serenity of nature to assuage the sorrow of us mortal beings, who live for awhile on her breast. Assuredly there is sorrow that may be so assuaged ; and the sorrow here spoken of—for poor Margaret, many years dead—was of that kind. But does not the heart of a man beat painfully, as if violence were offered to its most sacred memories, to hear from the lips of wisdom, that "sorrow and despair from ruin and from change, and all the griefs" that we can suffer here below, appear an idle dream among plumes, and weeds, and spear-grass, and mists, and rain-drops? "Where meditation is!" What meditation? Turn thou, O child of a day! to the New Testament, and therein thou mayest find comfort. It matters not whether a spring-bank be thy seat by Rydal Mere, "while heaven and earth do make one imagery," or thou sittest in the shadow of death, beside a tomb.

We said, that for the present we should confine our remarks on this subject to the story of Margaret ; but they are,

more or less, applicable to almost all the stories in "The Excursion." In many of the eloquent disquisitions and harangues of the Three Friends, they carry along with them the sympathies of all mankind; and the wisest may be enlightened by their wisdom. But what we complain of is, that neither in joy nor grief, happiness nor misery, is religion the dominant principle of thought and feeling in the character of any one human being with whom we are made acquainted, living or dead. Of not a single one, man or woman, are we made to feel the beauty of holiness—the power and the glory of the Christian Faith. Beings are brought before us whom we pity, respect, admire, love. The great poet is high-souled and tender-hearted—his song is pure as the morning, bright as day, solemn as night. But his inspiration is not drawn from the Book of God, but from the Book of Nature. Therefore it fails to sustain his genius when venturing into the depths of tribulation and anguish. Therefore imperfect are his most truthful delineations of sins and sorrows; and not in his philosophy, lofty though it be, can be found alleviation or cure of the maladies that kill the soul. Therefore never will "The Excursion" become a bosom-book, endeared to all ranks and conditions of a Christian People, like "The Task" or the "Night Thoughts." Their religion is that of revelation—it acknowledges no other source but the word of God. To that word, in all difficulty, distress, and dismay, these poets appeal; and though they may sometimes, or often, misinterpret its judgment, that is an evil incident to finite intelligence; and the very consciousness that it is so, inspires a perpetual humility that is itself a virtue found to accompany only a Christian's Faith.

We have elsewhere vindicated the choice of a person of low degree as Chief of "The Excursion," and exult to think that a great poet should have delivered his highest doctrines through the lips of a Scottish Pedlar.

> "Early had he learn'd
> To reverence the volume that displays
> The mystery of life that cannot die."

Throughout the poem he shows that he does reverence it, and that his whole being has been purified and elevated by its spirit. But fond as he is of preaching, and excellent in

the art or gift, a Christian Preacher he is not—at best a philosophical divine. Familiar by his parentage and nurture with all most hallowed round the poor man's hearth, and guarded by his noble nature from all offence to the sanctities there enshrined; yet the truth must be told, he speaks not, he expounds not the Word as the servant of the Lord, as the follower of Him Crucified. There is very much in his announcements to his equals wide of the mark set up in the New Testament. We seem to hear rather of a divine power and harmony in the universe than of the Living God. The spirit of Christianity as connected with the Incarnation of the Deity, the Human-God, the link between heaven and earth, between helplessness and omnipotence, ought to be everywhere visible in the religious effusions of a Christian Poet—wonder and awe for the greatness of God, gratitude and love for his goodness, humility and self-abasement for his own unworthiness. Passages may perhaps be found in "The Excursion" expressive of that spirit, but they are few and faint, and somewhat professional, falling not from the Pedlar but from the Pastor. If the mind, in forming its conceptions of divine things, is prouder of its own power than humbled in the comparison of its personal inferiority; and in enunciating them in verse, more rejoices in the consciousness of the power of its own genius than in the contemplation of Him from whom cometh every good and perfect gift—it has not attained Piety, and its worship is not an acceptable service. For it is self-worship—worship of the creature's own conceptions, and an overweening complacency with his own greatness, in being able to form and so to express them as to win or command the praise and adoration of his fellow-mortals. Those lofty speculations, alternately declaimed among the mountains, with an accompaniment of waterfalls, by men full of fancies and eloquent of speech, elude the hold of the earnest spirit longing for truth; disappointment and impatience grow on the humblest and most reverent mind, and escaping from the multitude of vain words, the neophyte finds in one chapter of a Book forgotten in that babblement, a light to his way and a support to his steps, which, following and trusting, he knows will lead him to everlasting life.

Throughout the poem there is much talk of the light of nature, little of the light of revelation, and they all speak of

the theological doctrines of which our human reason gives us assurance. Such expressions as these may easily lead to important error, and do, indeed, seem often to have been misconceived and misemployed. What those truths are which human reason, unassisted, would discover to us on these subjects, it is impossible for us to know, for we have never seen it left absolutely to itself. Instruction, more or less, in wandering tradition, or in express, full, and recorded revelation, has always accompanied it; and we have never had other experience of the human mind than as exerting its powers under the light of imparted knowledge. In these circumstances, all that can be properly meant by those expressions which regard the power of the human mind to guide, to enlighten, or to satisfy itself in such great inquiries is, not that it can be the discoverer of truth, but that, with the doctrines of truth set before it, it is able to deduce arguments from its own independent sources which confirm it in their belief; or that, with truth and error proposed to its choice, it has means, to a certain extent, in its own power, of distinguishing one from the other. For ourselves, we may understand easily that it would be impossible for us so to shut out from our minds the knowledge which has been poured in upon them from our earliest years, in order to ascertain what self-left reason could find out. Yet this much we are able to do in the speculations of our philosophy: We can inquire, in this light, what are the grounds of evidence which nature and reason themselves offer for belief in the same truths. A like remark must be extended to the morality which we seem now to inculcate from the authority of human reason. We no longer possess any such independent morality. The spirit of a higher, purer, moral law than man could discover, has been breathed over the world, and we have grown up in the air and the light of a system so congenial to the highest feelings of our human nature, that the wisest spirits amongst us have sometimes been tempted to forget that its origin is divine.

Had "The Excursion" been written in the poet's later life, it had not been so liable to such objections as these; for much of his poetry composed since that era is imbued with a religious spirit, answering the soul's desire of the devoutest Christian. His Ecclesiastical Sonnets are sacred Poetry in-

deed. How comprehensive the sympathy of a truly pious heart! How religion reconciles different forms, and modes, and signs, and symbols of worship, provided only they are all imbued with the spirit of faith! This is the toleration Christianity sanctions—for it is inspired by its own universal love. No sectarian feeling here, that would exclude or debar from the holiest chamber in the poet's bosom one sincere worshipper of our Father which is in heaven. Christian brethren! By that mysterious bond our natures are brought into more endearing communion—now more than ever brethren, because of the blood that was shed for us all from His blessed side! Even of that most awful mystery in some prayer-like strains the Poet tremblingly speaks, in many a strain, at once so affecting and so elevating—breathing so divinely of Christian charity to all whose trust is in the Cross! Who shall say what form of worship is most acceptable to the Almighty? All are holy in which the soul seeks to approach him—holy

> "The chapel lurking among trees,
> Where a few villagers on bended knees
> Find solace which a busy world disdains;"

we feel as the poet felt when he breathed to the image of some old abbey,—

> "Once ye were holy, ye are holy still!"

And what heart partakes not the awe of his

> "Beneath that branching roof
> Self-poised and scoop'd into ten thousand cells
> Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
> Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die"?

Read the first of these sonnets with the last—and then once more the strains that come between—and you will be made to feel how various and how vast beneath the sky are the regions set apart by the soul for prayer and worship; and that all places become consecrated—the high and the humble—the mean and the magnificent—in which Faith and Piety have sought to hold communion with Heaven.

But they who duly worship God in temples made with hands, meet every hour of their lives "Devotional Excitements" as they walk among His works; and in the later

poetry of Wordsworth these abound—age having solemnised the whole frame of his being, that was always alive to religious emotions—but more than ever now, as around his paths in the evening of life longer fall the mysterious shadows. More fervid lines have seldom flowed from his spirit in its devoutest mood, than some awakened by the sounds and sights of a happy day in May—to him—though no church-bell was heard—a Sabbath. His occasional poems are often felt by us to be linked together by the finest affinities, which perhaps are but affinities between the feelings they inspire. Thus we turn from those lines to some on a subject seemingly very different, from a feeling of such fine affinities—which haply are but those subsisting between all things and thoughts that are pure and good. We hear in them how the Poet, as he gazes on a Family that holds not the Christian Faith, embraces them in the folds of Christian Love—and how religion as well as nature sanctifies the tenderness that is yearning at his heart towards them—"a Jewish Family"—who, though outcasts by Heaven's decree, are not by Heaven, still merciful to man, left forlorn on earth.

How exquisite the stanzas composed in one of the Catholic Chapels in Switzerland,—

"Doom'd as we are our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The Altar, to deride the Fane,
Where patient sufferers bend, in trust
To win a happier hour.

I love, where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn Cell to gaze;
Hail to the firm unmoving Cross,
Aloft, where pines their branches toss!
And to the Chapel far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

Where'er we roam—along the brink
Of Rhine—or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champaign wide,
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity—to bid us think
And feel, if we would know."

How sweetly are interspersed among them some of humbler mood, most touching in their simple pathos—such as a Hymn for the boatmen as they approach the Rapids—Lines on hearing the song of the harvest damsels floating homeward on the lake of Brientz—the Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd—and the Three Cottage Girls, representatives of Italian, of Helvetian, and of Scottish beauty, brought together, as if by magic, into one picture, each breathing in her natural grace the peculiar spirit and distinctive character of her country's charms! Such gentle visions disappear, and we sit by the side of the Poet as he gazes from his boat floating on the Lake of Lugano, on the Church of San Salvador, which was almost destroyed by lightning a few years ago, while the altar and the image of the patron saint were untouched, and devoutly listen while he exclaims,—

> "Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times,
> Let all remind the soul of heaven;
> Our slack devotion needs them all;
> And faith, so oft of sense the thrall,
> While she, by aid of Nature, climbs,
> May hope to be forgiven."

We do not hesitate to pronounce "Eclipse of the Sun, 1820," one of the finest lyrical effusions of combined thought, passion, sentiment, and imagery, within the whole compass of poetry. If the beautiful be indeed essentially different from the sublime, we here feel that they may be made to coalesce so as to be in their united agencies one divine power. We called it lyrical, chiefly because of its transitions. Though not an ode, it is ode-like in its invocations; and it might be set and sung to music if Handel were yet alive, and St Cecilia to come down for an hour from heaven. How solemn the opening strain! and from the momentary vision of Science on her speculative Tower, how gently glides Imagination down, to take her place by the Poet's side, in his bark afloat beneath Italian skies—suddenly bedimmed, lake, land, and all, with a something between day and night. In a moment we are conscious of Eclipse. Our slight surprise is lost in the sense of a strange beauty—solemn not sad—settling on the face of nature and the abodes of men. In a single stanza filled with beautiful names of the beautiful, we have a vision of the Lake,

with all its noblest banks, and bays, and bowers, and mountains—when in an instant we are wafted away from a scene that might well have satisfied our imagination and our heart—if high emotions were not uncontrollable and omnipotent—wafted away by Fancy with the speed of Fire—lakes, groves, cliffs, mountains, all forgotten—and alight amid an aerial host of figures, human and divine, on a spire that seeks the sky. How still those imaged sanctities and purities, all white as snows of Apennine, stand in the heavenly region, circle above circle, and crowned as with a zone of stars! They are imbued with life. In their animation the figures of angels and saints, insensate stones no more, seem to feel the Eclipse that shadows them, and look awful in the portentous light. In his inspiration he transcends the grandeur even of that moment's vision—and beholds in the visages of that aerial host those of the sons of heaven darkening with celestial sorrow at the Fall of Man—when

> "Throngs of celestial visages,
> Darkening like water in the breeze,
> A holy sadness shared."

Never since the day on which the wondrous edifice, in its consummate glory, first saluted the sun, had it inspired in the soul of kneeling saint a thought so sad and so sublime—a thought beyond the reaches of the soul of him whose genius bade it bear up all its holy adornments so far from earth, that the silent company seem sometimes, as light and shadow moves among them, to be in ascension to heaven. But the Sun begins again to look like the Sun, and the poet, relieved by the joyful light from that awful trance, delights to behold

> "Town and Tower,
> The Vineyard and the Olive Bower,
> Their lustre re-assume;"

and "breathes there a man with soul so dead," that it burns not within him as he hears the heart of the husband and the father breathe forth its love and its fear, remembering on a sudden the far distant whom it has never forgotten—a love and a fear that saddens, but disturbs not, for the vision he saw had inspired him with a trust in the tender mercies of God? Commit to faithful memory, O Friend! who may some

time or other be a traveller over the wide world, the sacred stanzas that bring the Poem to a close—and it will not fail to comfort thee when sitting all alone by the well in the wilderness, or walking along the strange streets of foreign cities, or lying in thy cot at midnight afloat on far-off seas.

> " O ye, who guard and grace my Home
> While in far-distant lands we roam,
> Was such a vision given to you ?
> Or, while we look'd with favour'd eyes,
> Did sullen mist hide lake and skies
> And mountains from your view ?
>
> " I ask in vain—and know far less,
> If sickness, sorrow, or distress
> Have spared my Dwelling to this hour ;
> Sad blindness ! but ordained to prove
> Our faith in Heaven's unfailing love,
> And all-controlling power."

Let us fly from Rydal to Sheffield. James Montgomery is truly a religious poet. His popularity, which is great, has, by some scribes sitting in the armless chairs of the scorners, been attributed chiefly to the power of sectarianism. He is, we believe, a sectary ; and, if all sects were animated by the spirit that breathes throughout his poetry, we should have no fears for the safety and stability of the Established Church ; for in that self-same spirit was she built, and by that self-same spirit were her foundations dug in a rock. Many are the lights—solemn and awful all—in which the eyes of us mortal creatures may see the Christian dispensation. Friends, looking down from the top of a high mountain on a city-sprinkled plain, have each his own vision of imagination—each his own sinking or swelling of heart. They urge no inquisition into the peculiar affections of each other's secret breasts—all assured, from what each knows of his brother, that every eye there may see God—that every tongue that has the gift of lofty utterance may sing His praises aloud—that the lips that remain silent may be mute in adoration—and that all the distinctions of habits, customs, professions, modes of life, even natural constitution and form of character, if not lost, may be blended together in mild amalgamation under the common atmosphere of emotion, even as the towers, domes,

and temples, are all softly or brightly interfused with the huts, cots, and homesteads—the whole scene below harmonious because inhabited by beings created by the same God—in his own image—and destined for the same immortality.

It is base therefore, and false, to attribute, in an invidious sense, any of Montgomery's fame to any such cause. No doubt many persons read his poetry on account of its religion, who, but for that, would not have read it; and no doubt, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. But so, too, do many persons read Wordsworth's poetry on account of its religion—the religion of the woods—who, but for that, would not have read it; and so, too, many of them neither feel nor understand it. So is it with the common-manners-painting poetry of Crabbe—the dark-passion-painting poetry of Byron—the high-romance-painting poetry of Scott—and so on with Moore, Coleridge, Southey, and the rest. But it is to the *mens divinior*, however displayed, that they owe all their fame. Had Montgomery not been a true poet, all the Religious Magazines in the world could not have saved his name from forgetfulness and oblivion. He might have flaunted his day like the melancholy Poppy — melancholy in all its ill-scented gaudiness; but as it is, he is like the Rose of Sharon, whose balm and beauty shall not wither, planted on the banks of "that river whose streams make glad the city of the Lord."

Indeed, we see no reason why poetry, conceived in the spirit of a most exclusive sectarianism, may not be of a very high order, and powerfully impressive on minds whose religious tenets are most irreconcilable and hostile to those of the sect. Feelings, by being unduly concentrated, are not thereby necessarily enfeebled—on the contrary, often strengthened; and there is a grand austerity which the imagination more than admires—which the conscience scarcely condemns. The feeling, the conviction from which that austerity grows, is in itself right; for it is a feeling—a conviction of the perfect righteousness of God—the utter worthlessness of self-left man—the awful sanctity of duty—and the dreadfulness of the judgment-doom, from which no soul is safe till the seals have been broken, and the Archangel has blown his trumpet. A religion planted in such convictions as these, may become dark and disordered in its future growth within the spirit; and the tree, though of good seed and in a strong soil, may

come to be laden with bitter fruit, and the very droppings of its leaves may be pernicious to all who rest within its shade. Still, such shelter is better in the blast than the trunk of a dead faith; and such food, unwholesome though it be, is not so miserable as famine to a hungry soul.

Grant, then, that there may be in Mr Montgomery's poetry certain sentiments, which, in want of a better word, we call Sectarian. They are not necessarily false, although not perfectly reconcilable to our own creed, which, we shall suppose, is true. On the contrary, we may be made much the better and the wiser men by meditating upon them; for while they may, perhaps (and we are merely making a supposition), be too strongly felt by him, they may be too feebly felt by us—they may, perhaps, be rather blots on the beauty of his poetry than of his faith—and if, in some degree, offensive in the composition of a poem, far less so, or not at all, in that of a life.

All his shorter poems are stamped with the character of the man. Most of them are breathings of his own devout spirit, either delighted or awed by a sense of the Divine goodness and mercy towards itself, or tremblingly alive—not in mere sensibility to human virtues and joys, crimes and sorrows, for that often belongs to the diseased and depraved—but in solemn, moral, and religious thought, to all of good or evil befalling his brethren of mankind. "A sparrow cannot fall to the ground"—a flower of the field cannot wither immediately before his eyes—without awakening in his heart such thoughts as we may believe God intended should be awakened even by such sights as these; for the fall of a sparrow is a Scriptural illustration of His providence, and His hand framed the lily, whose array is more royal than was that of Solomon in all his glory. Herein he resembles Wordsworth—less profound certainly—less lofty; for in its highest moods the genius of Wordsworth walks by itself—unapproachable—on the earth it beautifies. But Montgomery's poetical piety is far more prevalent over his whole character; it belongs more essentially and permanently to the man. Perhaps, although we shall not say so, it may be more simple, natural, and true. More accordant it certainly is, with the sympathies of ordinary minds. The piety of his poetry is far more Christian than that of Wordsworth. It is in all his feelings, all his thoughts, all his imagery; and at the close of most of his

beautiful compositions, which are so often avowals, confessions, prayers, thanksgivings, we feel, not the moral, but the religion of his song. He "improves" all the "occasions" of this life, because he has an "eye that broods on its own heart;" and that heart is impressed by all lights and shadows, like a river or lake whose waters are pure—pure in their sources and in their course. He is, manifestly, a man of the kindliest home-affections; and these, though it is to be hoped the commonest of all, preserved to him in unabated glow and freshness by innocence and piety, often give vent to themselves in little hymns and ode-like strains, of which the rich and even novel imagery shows how close is the connection between a pure heart and a fine fancy, and that the flowers of poetry may be brought from afar, nor yet be felt to be exotics—to intertwine with the very simplest domestic feelings and thoughts—so simple, so perfectly human, that there is a touch of surprise on seeing them capable of such adornment, and more than a touch of pleasure on feeling how much that adornment becomes them—brightening without changing, and adding admiration to delight—wonder to love.

Montgomery, too, is almost as much of an egotist as Wordsworth; and thence, frequently, his power. The poet who keeps all the appearances of external nature, and even all the passions of humanity, at arm's length, that he may gaze on, inspect, study, and draw their portraits, either in the garb they ordinarily wear, or in a fancy dress, is likely to produce a strong likeness indeed; yet shall his pictures be wanting in ease and freedom—they shall be cold and stiff—and both passion and imagination shall desiderate something characteristic in nature, of the mountain or the man. But the poet who hugs to his bosom everything he loves or admires—themselves, or the thoughts that are their shadows—who is himself still the centre of the enchanted circle—who, in the delusion of a strong creative genius, absolutely believes that were he to die, all that he now sees and hears delighted would die with him—who not only sees

"Poetic visions swarm on every bough,"

but the history of all his own most secret emotions written on the very rocks—who gathers up the many beautiful things

that in the prodigality of nature lie scattered over the earth, neglected or unheeded, and the more dearly, the more passionately loves them, because they are now appropriated to the uses of his own imagination, who will by her alchymy so further brighten them that the thousands of eyes that formerly passed them by unseen or scorned, will be dazzled by their rare and transcendent beauty—he is the "prevailing Poet!" Montgomery neither seeks nor shuns those dark thoughts that will come and go, night and day, unbidden, forbidden, across the minds of all men—fortified although the main entrances may be; but when they do invade his secret, solitary hours, he turns even such visitants to a happy account, and questions them, ghost-like as they are, concerning both the future and the past. Melancholy as often his views are, we should not suppose him a man of other than a cheerful mind; for whenever the theme allows or demands it, he is not averse to a sober glee, a composed gaiety that, although we cannot say it ever so far sparkles out as to deserve to be called absolutely brilliant, yet lends a charm to his lighter-toned compositions, which it is peculiarly pleasant now and then to feel in the writings of a man whose genius is naturally, and from the course of life, not gloomy indeed, but pensive, and less disposed to indulge itself in smiles than in tears.

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER III.

People nowadays will write, because they see so many writing; the impulse comes upon them from without, not from within; loud voices from streets and squares of cities call on them to join the throng, but the still small voice that speaketh in the penetralia of the spirit is mute; and what else can be the result, but, in place of the song of lark, or linnet, or nightingale, at the best a concert of mocking-birds, at the worst an oratorio of ganders and bubbleys?

At this particular juncture or crisis, the disease would fain assume the symptoms of religious inspiration. The poetasters are all pious—all smitten with sanctity—Christian all over—and crossing and jostling on the Course of Time—as they think, on the high road to Heaven and Immortality. Never was seen before such a shameless set of hypocrites. Down on their knees they fall in booksellers' shops, and, crowned with foolscap, repeat to Blue-Stockings prayers addressed in doggrel to the Deity! They bandy about the Bible as if it were an Album. They forget that the poorest sinner has a soul to be saved, as well as a set of verses to be damned; they look forward to the First of the Month with more fear and trembling than to the Last Day; and beseech a critic to be merciful upon them with far more earnestness than they ever beseeched their Maker. They pray through the press—vainly striving to give some publicity to what must be private for evermore; and are seen wiping away, at tea-parties, the tears of contrition and repentance for capital crimes perpetrated but on paper, and perpetrated thereon so paltrily, that so far from being worthy of hell-fire, such delinquents, it is felt, would be more suitably punished by being singed like plucked fowls with their own unsaleable sheets. They are

frequently so singed; yet singeing has not the effect upon them for which singeing is designed; and like chickens in a shower that have got the pip, they keep still gasping and shooting out their tongues, and walking on tip-toe with their tails down, till finally they go to roost in some obscure corner, and are no more seen among bipeds.

Among those, however, who have been unfortunately beguiled by the spirit of imitation and sympathy into religious poetry, one or two—who for the present must be nameless—have shown feeling; and would they but obey their feeling, and prefer walking on the ground with their own free feet, to attempting to fly in the air with borrowed and bound wings, they might produce something really poetical, and acquire a creditable reputation. But they are too aspiring; and have taken into their hands the sacred lyre without due preparation. He who is so familiar with his Bible, that each chapter, open it where he will, teems with household words, may draw thence the theme of many a pleasant and pathetic song. For is not all human nature and all human life shadowed forth in those pages? But the heart, to sing well from the Bible, must be imbued with religious feelings, as a flower is alternately with dew and sunshine. The study of The Book must have been begun in the simplicity of childhood, when it was felt to be indeed divine—and carried on through all those silent intervals in which the soul of manhood is restored, during the din of life, to the purity and peace of its early being. The Bible must be to such a poet even as the sky—with its sun, moon, and stars—its boundless blue with all its cloud-mysteries—its peace deeper than the grave, because of realms beyond the grave—its tumult louder than that of life, because heard altogether in all the elements. He who begins the study of the Bible late in life, must, indeed, devote himself to it—night and day—and with a humble and a contrite heart as well as an awakened and soaring spirit, ere he can hope to feel what he understands, or to understand what he feels—thoughts and feelings breathing in upon him, as if from a region hanging, in its mystery, between heaven and earth. Nor do we think that he will lightly venture on the composition of poetry drawn from such a source. The very thought of doing so, were it to occur to his mind, would seem

irreverent; it would convince him that he was still the slave of vanity, and pride, and the world.

They alone, therefore, to whom God has given genius as well as faith, zeal, and benevolence—will, of their own accord, fix their Pindus either on Lebanon or Calvary—and of these but few. The genius must be high—the faith sure—and human love must coalesce with divine, that the strain may have power to reach the spirits of men, immersed as they are in matter, and with all their apprehensions and conceptions blended with material imagery, and the things of this moving earth and this restless life.

So gifted and so endowed, a great or good poet, having chosen his subject well within religion, is on the sure road to immortal fame. His work, when done, must secure sympathy for ever; a sympathy not dependent on creeds, but out of which creeds spring, all of them manifestly moulded by imaginative affections of religion. Christian Poetry will outlive every other; for the time will come when Christian Poetry will be deeper and higher far than any that has ever yet been known among men. Indeed, the sovereign songs hitherto have been either religious or superstitious; and as "the day-spring from on High that has visited us" spreads wider and wider over the earth, "the soul of the world, dreaming of things to come," shall assuredly see more glorified visions than have yet been submitted to her ken. That poetry has so seldom satisfied the utmost longings and aspirations of human nature, can only have been because Poetry has so seldom dealt in its power with the only mysteries worth knowing—the greater mysteries of religion, into which the Christian is initiated only through faith, an angel sent from heaven to spirits struggling by supplications and sacrifices to escape from sin and death.

These, and many other thoughts and feelings concerning the "Vision and the Faculty divine," when employed on divine subjects, have arisen within us, on reading—which we have often done with delight—"The Christian Year," so full of Christian poetry of the purest character. Mr Keble is a poet whom Cowper himself would have loved—for in him piety inspires genius, and fancy and feeling are celestialised by religion. We peruse his book in a tone and temper of

spirit similar to that which is breathed upon us by some calm day in spring, when all imagery is serene and still—cheerful in the main—yet with a touch and a tinge of melancholy, which makes all the blended bliss and beauty at once more endearing and more profound. We should no more think of criticising such poetry than of criticising the clear blue skies—the soft green earth—the "liquid lapse" of an unpolluted stream, that

> "Doth make sweet music with the enamell'd stones,
> Giving a gentle kiss to every flower
> It overtaketh on its pilgrimage."

All is purity and peace; as we look and listen, we partake of the universal calm, and feel in nature the presence of Him from whom it emanated. Indeed, we do not remember any poetry nearly so beautiful as this, which reminds one so seldom of the poet's art. We read it without ever thinking of the place which its author may hold among poets, just as we behold a "lily of the field" without comparing it with other flowers, but satisfied with its own pure and simple loveliness; or each separate poem may be likened, in its unostentatious—unambitious—unconscious beauty—to

> "A violet by a mossy stone,
> Half hidden to the eye."

Of all the flowers that sweeten this fair earth, the violet is indeed the most delightful in itself—form, fragrance, and colour—nor less in the humility of its birthplace, and its haunts in the "sunshiny shade." Therefore, 'tis a meet emblem of those sacred songs that may be said to blossom on Mount Sion.

The most imaginative poetry inspired by Nature, and dedicated to her praise, is never perfectly and consummately beautiful till it ascends into the religious; but then religion breathes from, and around, and about it, only at last when the poet has been brought, by the leading of his own aroused spirit, to the utmost pitch of his inspiration. He begins, and continues long, unblamed in mere emotions of beauty; and he often pauses unblamed, and brings his strain to a close, without having forsaken this earth, and the thoughts and feelings which belong alone to this earth. But poetry like that of the "Christian Year" springs at once, visibly and audibly, from

religion as its fount. If it, indeed, issue from one of the many springs religion opens in the human heart, no fear of its ever being dried up. Small indeed may seem the silver line, when first the rill steals forth from its sacred source! But how soon it begins to sing with a clear loud voice in the solitude! Bank and brae—tree, shrub, and flower—grow greener at each successive waterfall—the rains no more disturb that limpid element than the dews—and never does it lose some reflection of the heavens.

In a few modest words, Mr Keble states the aim and object of his volume. He says truly, that it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess in her authorised formularies an ample and secure provision, both for a sound rule of faith and a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion. The object of his publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer-Book. We add, that its object has been attained. In England, "The Christian Year" is already placed in a thousand homes among household books. People are neither blind nor deaf yet to lovely sights and sounds—and a true poet is as certain of recognition now as at any period of our literature. In Scotland we have no prayer-book printed on paper—perhaps it would be better if we had; but the prayer-book which has inspired Mr Keble, is compiled and composed from another Book, which, we believe, is more read in Scotland than in any other country. Here the Sabbath reigns in power, that is felt to be a sovereign power over all the land. We have, it may be said, no prescribed holydays; but all the events recorded in the Bible, and which in England make certain days holy in outward as well as inward observances, are familiar to our knowledge and our feeling *here;* and therefore the poetry that seeks still more to hallow them to the heart, will find every good heart recipient of its inspiration—for the Christian creed is "wide and general as the casing air," and felt as profoundly in the Highland heather-glen, where no sound of psalms is heard but on the Sabbath, as in the cathedral towns and cities of England, where so often

> "Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
> The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

Poetry, in our age, has been made too much a thing to talk about—to show off upon—as if the writing and the reading of it were to be reckoned among what are commonly called accomplishments. Thus, poets have too often sacrificed the austere sanctity of the divine art to most unworthy purposes, of which, perhaps, the most unworthy—for it implies much voluntary self-degradation—is mere popularity. Against all such low aims he is preserved, who, with Christian meekness, approaches the muse in the sanctuaries of religion. He seeks not to force his songs on the public ear; his heart is free from the fever of fame; his poetry is praise and prayer. It meets our ear like the sound of psalms from some unseen dwelling among the woods or hills, at which the wayfarer or wanderer stops on his journey, and feels at every pause a holier solemnity in the silence of nature. Such poetry is indeed *got by heart;* and memory is then tenacious to the death, for her hold on what she loves is strengthened as much by grief as by joy; and, when even hope itself is dead—if, indeed, hope ever dies—the trust is committed to despair. Words are often as unforgetable as voiceless thoughts; they become very thoughts themselves, and *are* what they represent. How are many of the simply, rudely, but fervently and beautifully rhymed Psalms of David, very part and parcel of the most spiritual treasures of the Scottish peasant's being!

> "The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
> He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green: he leadeth me
> The quiet waters by."

These four lines sanctify to the thoughtful shepherd on the braes every stream that glides through the solitary places—they have often given colours to the greensward beyond the brightness of all herbage and of all flowers. Thrice hallowed is that poetry which makes us mortal creatures feel the union that subsists between the Book of Nature and the Book of Life!

Poetry has endeared childhood by a thousand pictures, in which fathers and mothers behold with deeper love the faces of their own offspring. Such poetry has almost always been the production of the strongest and wisest minds. Common intellects derive no power from earliest memories; the primal morn, to them never bright, has utterly faded in the smoky

day; the present has swallowed up the past, as the future will swallow up the present; each season of life seems to stand by itself as a separate existence; and when old age comes, how helpless, melancholy, and forlorn! But he who lives in the spirit of another creed, sees far into the heart of Christianity. He hears a divine voice saying—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!" Thus it is that Poetry throws back upon the New Testament the light she has borrowed from it, and that man's mortal brother speaks in accordance with the Saviour of Man. On a dead insensible flower—a lily—a rose—a violet—a daisy, poetry may pour out all its divinest power—just as the sun itself sometimes seems to look with all its light on some one especial blossom, all at once made transparently lustrous. And what if the flower be alive in all its leaves—and have in it an immortal spirit? Or what if its leaves be dead, and the immortal spirit gone away to heaven? Genius shall change death into sleep—till the grave, in itself so dark and dismal, shall seem a bed of bright and celestial repose. From poetry, in words or marble—both alike still and serene as water upon grass—we turn to the New Testament, and read of the "Holy Innocents." "They were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." We look down into the depths of that text—and we then turn again to Keble's lines, which from those depths have flowed over upon the uninspired page! Yet not uninspired—if that name may be given to strains which, like the airs that had touched the flowers of Paradise, "whisper whence they stole those balmy sweets." Revelation has shown us that "we are greater than we know;" and who may neglect the Infancy of that Being for whom Godhead died!

They who read the lines on the "Holy Innocents" in a mood of mind worthy of them, will go on, with an equal delight, through those on "The Epiphany." They are separated in the volume by some kindred and congenial strains; but when brought close together, they occupy the still region of thought as two large clear stars do of themselves seem to occupy the entire sky.

How far better than skilfully—how inspiredly does this Christian poet touch upon each successive holy theme—wing-

ing his way through the stainless ether like some dove gliding from tree to tree, and leaving one place of rest only for another equally happy, on the folding and unfolding of its peaceful flight! Of late many versifiers have attempted the theme; and some of them with shameful unsuccess. A bad poem on such a subject is a sin. He who is a Christian indeed, will, when the star of Bethlehem rises before his closed eyes, be mute beneath the image, or he will hail it in strains simple as were those of the shepherds watching their flocks by night when it appeared of old, high as were those of the sages who came from the East bearing incense to the Child in the Manger. Such are this Poet's strains, evolving themselves out of the few words—"Behold, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

The transition from those affecting lines is natural and delightful to a strain further on in the volume, entitled "Catechism." How soon the infant spirit is touched with love—another name for religion—none may dare to say who have watched the eyes of little children. Feeling and thought would seem to come upon them like very inspiration—so strong it often is, and sudden, and clear; yet, no doubt, all the work of natural processes going on within Immortality. The wisdom of age has often been seen in the simplicity of childhood—creatures but five or six years old—soon perhaps about to disappear—astonishing, and saddening, and subliming the souls of their parents and their parents' friends, by a holy precocity of all pitiful and compassionate feelings, blended into a mysterious piety that has made them sing happy hymns on the brink of death and the grave. Such affecting instances of almost infantine unfolding of the spirit beneath spiritual influences should not be rare—nor are they rare—in truly Christian households. Almost as soon as the heart is moved by filial affection, that affection grows reverent even to earthly parents—and, ere long, becomes piety towards the name of God and Saviour. Yet philosophers have said that the child must not be too soon spoken to about religion. Will they fix the time? No—let religion—a myriad-meaning word — be whispered and breathed round about them, as soon as intelligence smiles in their eyes and quickens their ears, while

enjoying the sights and sounds of their own small yet multitudinous world.

Let us turn to another strain of the same mood, which will be read with tears by many a grateful heart—on the "Churching of Women." What would become of us without the ceremonies of religion? How they strengthen the piety out of which they spring! How, by concentrating all that is holy and divine around their outward forms, do they purify and sanctify the affections! What a change on his infant's face is wrought before a father's eyes by Baptism! How the heart of the husband and the father yearns, as he sees the wife and mother kneeling in thanksgiving after childbirth!

"Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." What is all the poetry that genius ever breathed over all the flowers of this earth to that one divine sentence! It has inspired our Christian poet—and here is his heartfelt homily.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

"Sweet nurslings of the vernal skies,
Bathed in soft airs, and fed with dew,
What more than magic in you lies
To fill the heart's fond view?
In childhood's sports companions gay,
In sorrow, on Life's downward way,
How soothing! in our last decay
Memorials prompt and true.

Relics ye are of Eden's bowers,
As pure, as fragrant, and as fair,
As when ye crown'd the sunshine hours
Of happy wanderers there.
Fall'n all beside—the world of life,
How is it stain'd with fear and strife!
In Reason's world what storms are rife,
What passions rage and glare!

But cheerful and unchanged the while
Your first and perfect form ye show,
The same that won Eve's matron smile
In the world's opening glow.

The stars of Heaven a course are taught
Too high above our human thought ;—
Ye may be found if ye are sought,
And as we gaze we know.

Ye dwell beside our paths and homes,
Our paths of sin, our homes of sorrow,
And guilty man, where'er he roams,
Your innocent mirth may borrow.
The birds of air before us fleet,
They cannot brook our shame to meet—
But we may taste your solace sweet,
And come again to-morrow.

Ye fearless in your nests abide—
Nor may we scorn, too proudly wise,
Your silent lessons undescried
By all but lowly eyes ;
For ye could draw th' admiring gaze
Of Him who worlds and hearts surveys :
Your order wild, your fragrant maze,
He taught us how to prize.

Ye felt your Maker's smile that hour,
As when he paused and own'd you good ;
His blessing on earth's primal bower,
Yet felt it all renew'd.
What care ye now, if winter's storm
Sweep ruthless o'er each silken form ?
Christ's blessing at your heart is warm,
Ye fear no vexing mood.

Alas ! of thousand bosoms kind,
That daily court you and caress,
How few the happy secret find
Of your calm loveliness !
'Live for to-day ! to-morrow's light
To-morrow's cares shall bring to sight.
Go, sleep like closing flowers at night,
And Heaven thy morn will bless.'"

Such poetry as this must have a fine influence on all the best human affections. Sacred are such songs to sorrow—and sorrow is either a frequent visitor, or a domesticated inmate, in

every household. Religion may thus be made to steal unawares, even during ordinary hours, into the commonest ongoings of life. Call not the mother unhappy who closes the eyes of her dead child, whether it has smiled lonely in the house, the sole delight of her eyes, or bloomed among other flowers, now all drooping for its sake—nor yet call the father unhappy who lays his sweet son below the earth, and returns to the home where his voice is to be heard never more. That affliction brings forth feelings unknown before in his heart; calming all turbulent thoughts by the settled peace of the grave. Then every page of the Bible is beautiful—and beautiful every verse of poetry that thence draws its inspiration. Thus in the pale and almost ghost-like countenance of decay, our hearts are not touched by the remembrance alone of beauty which is departed, and by the near extinction of loveliness which we behold fading before our eyes—but a beauty, fairer and deeper far, lies around the hollow eye and the sunken cheek, breathed from the calm air of the untroubled spirit that has heard resigned the voice that calls it away from the dim shades of mortality. Well may that beauty be said to be religious; for in it speaks the soul, conscious, in the undreaded dissolution of its earthly frame, of a being destined to everlasting bliss. With every deep emotion arising from our contemplation of such beauty as this—religious beauty beaming in the human countenance, whether in joy or sadness, health or decay—there is profoundly interfused a sense of the soul's spirituality, which silently sheds over the emotion something celestial and divine, rendering it not only different in degree, but altogether distinct in kind, from all the feelings that things merely perishable can inspire—so that the spirit is fully satisfied, and the feeling of beauty is but a vivid recognition of its own deathless being and ethereal essence. This is a feeling of beauty which was but faintly known to the human heart in those ages of the world when all other feelings of beauty were most perfect; and accordingly we find, in the most pathetic strains of their elegiac poetry, lamentations over the beauty intensely worshipped in the dust, which was to lie for ever over its now beamless head. But to the Christian who may have seen the living lustre leave the eye of some beloved friend, there must have shone a beauty in his latest smile, which spoke not alone of a brief scene closed, but of an endless scene unfolding; while

its cessation, instead of leaving him in utter darkness, seemed to be accompanied with a burst of light.

Much of our most fashionable Modern Poetry is at once ludicrously and lamentably unsuitable and unseasonable to the innocent and youthful creatures who shed tears "such as angels weep" over the shameful sins of shameless sinners, crimes which, when perpetrated out of Poetry, and by persons with vulgar surnames, elevate their respective heroes to that vulgar altitude—the gallows. The darker—the stronger passions, forsooth! And what hast thou to do—my dove-eyed Margaret, with the darker and stronger passions? Nothing whatever in thy sweet, still, serene, and seemingly almost sinless world. Be the brighter and the weaker passions thine—brighter indeed—yet say not *weaker*, for they are strong as death;—Love and Pity, Awe and Reverence, Joy, Grief, and Sorrow, sunny smiles and showery tears—be these all thy own—and sometimes, too, on melancholy nights, let the heaven of thy imagination be spanned in its starriness by the most celestial Evanescence—a Lunar Rainbow.

There is such perfect sincerity in the "Christian Year"—such perfect sincerity, and consequently such simplicity—that though the production of a fine and finished scholar, we cannot doubt that it will some day or other find its way into many of the dwellings of humble life. Such descent, if descent it be, must be of all receptions the most delightful to the heart of a Christian poet. As intelligence spreads more widely over the land, why fear that it will deaden religion? Let us believe that it will rather vivify and quicken it; and that in time true poetry, such as this, of a character somewhat higher than probably can be yet felt, understood, and appreciated by the people, will come to be easy and familiar, and blended with all the other benign influences breathed over their common existence by books. Meanwhile the "Christian Year" will be finding its way into many houses where the inmates read from the love of reading—not for mere amusement only, but for instruction and a deeper delight; and we shall be happy if our recommendation causes its pages to be illumined by the gleams of a few more peaceful hearths, and to be rehearsed by a few more happy voices in the "parlour twilight."

We cannot help expressing the pleasure it has given us to

see so much true poetry coming from Oxford. It is delightful to see that classical literature, which sometimes, we know not how, certainly has a chilling effect on poetical feeling, there warming it as it ought to do, and causing it to produce itself in song. Oxford has produced many true poets; Collins, Warton, Bowles, Heber, Milman, and now Keble—are all her own—her inspired sons. Their strains are not steeped in "port and prejudice;" but in the—Isis. Heaven bless Iffley and Godstow—and many another sweet old ruined place—secluded, but not far apart from her own inspiring Sanctities! And those who love her not, never may the Muses love!

SACRED POETRY.

CHAPTER IV.

In his Poem, entitled, "The Omnipresence of the Deity," Mr Robert Montgomery writes thus,—

> "Lo! there, in yonder fancy-haunted room,
> What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom,
> When pale, and shiv'ring, and bedew'd with fear,
> The dying sceptic felt his hour drew near!
> From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
> No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell;
> As the last throes of death convulsed his cheek,
> He gnash'd, and scowl'd, and raised a hideous shriek,
> Rounded his eyes into a ghastly glare,
> Lock'd his white lips—and all was mute despair!
> Go, child of darkness, see a Christian die;
> No horror pales his lip, or rolls his eye;
> No dreadful doubts, or dreamy terrors, start
> The hope Religion pillows on his heart,
> When with a dying hand he waves adieu
> To all who love so well, and weep so true:
> Meek as an infant to the mother's breast
> Turns fondly longing for its wonted rest,
> He pants for where congenial spirits stray,
> Turns to his God, and sighs his soul away."

First, as to the execution of this passage. "Fancy-haunted" may do, but it is not a sufficiently strong expression for the occasion. In every such picture as this, we demand appropriate vigour in every word intended to be vigorous, and which is important to the effect of the whole.

> "From his parch'd tongue no sainted murmurs fell,
> No bright hopes kindled at his faint farewell."

How could they ?—The line but one before is,

"What mutter'd curses trembled through the gloom."

This, then, is purely ridiculous, and we cannot doubt that Mr Montgomery will confess that it is so; but independently of that, he is describing the deathbed of a person who, *ex hypothesi*, could have no bright hopes, could breathe no sainted murmurs. He might as well, in a description of a negress, have told us that she had no long, smooth, shining, yellow locks—no light-blue eyes—no ruddy and rosy cheeks—nor yet a bosom white as snow. The execution of the picture of the Christian is not much better—it is too much to use, in the sense here given to them, no fewer than three verbs—"pales"—"rolls"—"starts," in four lines.

"The hope Religion pillows on his heart,"

is not a good line, and it is a borrowed one.

"When with a dying hand he waves adieu,"

conveys an unnatural image. Dying men do not act so. Not thus are taken eternal farewells. The motion in the sea-song was more natural—

"She waved adieu, and kiss'd her lily hand."

"*Weeps so true*," means nothing, nor is it English. The grammar is not good of,

"He *pants for where* congenial spirits"—

Neither is the word *pants* by any means the right one; and in such an awful crisis, admire who may the simile of the infant longing for its mother's breast, we never can in its present shape; while there is the line,

"Turns to his God, *and sighs his soul away;*"

a prettiness we very much dislike—alter one word, and it would be voluptuous—nor do we hesitate to call the passage a puling one altogether, and such as ought to be expunged from all paper.

But that is not all we have to say against it—it is radically and essentially bad, because it either proves nothing of what it is meant to prove—or what no human being on earth ever

disputed. Be fair — be just in all that concerns religion. Take the best—the most moral, if the word can be used—the most enlightened Sceptic, and the true Christian, and compare their deathbeds. That of the Sceptic will be disturbed or disconsolate—that of the Christian confiding or blessed. But to contrast the deathbed of an absolute maniac, muttering curses, gnashing and scowling, and "raising a hideous shriek," and "rounding his eyes with a ghastly glare," and convulsed, too, with severe bodily throes—with that of a convinced, confiding, and conscientious Christian, a calm, meek, undoubting believer, happy in the "hope religion pillows on his heart," and enduring no fleshly agonies, can serve no purpose under the sun. Men who have the misery of being unbelievers, are at all times to be pitied—most of all in their last hours; but though theirs be then dim melancholy, or dark despair, they express neither the one state nor the other by mutterings, curses, and hideous shrieks. Such a wretch there may sometimes be—like him "who died and made no sign;" but there is no more sense in seeking to brighten the character of the Christian by its contrast with that of such an Atheist, than by contrast with a fiend to brighten the beauty of an angel.

Finally, are the deathbeds of all good Christians so calm as this—and do they all thus meekly

"Pant for where congenial spirits stray,"

a line, besides its other vice, most unscriptural? Congenial spirit is not the language of the New Testament. Alas! for poor weak human nature at the dying hour! Not even can the Christian always then retain unquaking trust in his Saviour! "This is the blood that was shed for thee," are words whose mystery quells not always nature's terror. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is renewed in vain—and he remembers, in doubt and dismay, words that, if misunderstood, would appal all the Christian world—"My God—my God—why hast thou forsaken me?" Perhaps, before the Faith, that has waxed dim and died in his brain distracted by pain, and disease, and long sleeplessness, and a weight of woe —for he is a father who strove in vain to burst those silken ties, that winding all round and about his very soul and his very body, bound him to those dear little ones, who are of the same spirit and the same flesh,—we say, before that Faith

could, by the prayers of holy men, be restored and revivified, and the Christian once more comforted by thinking on Him, who for all human beings did take upon him the rueful burden and agonies of the Cross—Death may have come for his prey, and left the chamber, of late so hushed and silent, at full liberty to weep! Enough to know, that though Christianity be divine, we are human,—that the vessel is weak in which that glorious light may be enshrined—weak as the potter's clay—and that though Christ died to save sinners, sinners who believe in Him, and therefore shall not perish, may yet lose hold of the belief when their understandings are darkened by the shadow of death, and, like Peter losing faith and sinking in the sea, feel themselves descending into some fearful void, and cease here to be, ere they find voice to call on the name of the Lord—"Help, or I perish!"

What may be the nature of the thoughts and feelings of an Atheist, either when in great joy or great sorrow, full of life and the spirit of life, or in mortal malady and environed with the toils of death, it passes the power of our imagination even dimly to conceive; nor are we convinced that there ever was an utter Atheist. The thought of a God will enter in, barred though the doors be both of the understanding and the heart, and all the windows supposed to be blocked up against the light. The soul, blind and deaf as it may often be, cannot always resist the intimations all life long, day and night, forced upon it from the outer world; its very necessities, nobler far than those of the body, even when most degraded, importunate when denied their manna, are to it oftentimes a silent or a loud revelation. Then, not to feel and think as other beings do with "discourse of reason," is most hard and difficult indeed, even for a short time, and on occasions of very inferior moment. Being men, we are carried away, willing or unwilling, and often unconsciously, by the great common instinct; we keep sailing with the tide of humanity, whether in flow or ebb—fierce as demons and the sons of perdition, if that be the temper of the congregating hour—mild and meek as Pity, or the new-born babe, when the afflatus of some divine sympathy has breathed through the multitude, nor one creature escaped its influence, like a spring day that steals through a murmuring forest, till not a single tree, even in the darkest nook, is without some touch

of the season's sunshine. Think, then, of one who would fain be an Atheist, conversing with the "sound, healthy children of the God of heaven!" To his reason, which is his solitary pride, arguments might in vain be addressed, for he exults in being "an Intellectual All in All," and is a bold-browed sophist to daunt even the eyes of Truth—eyes which can indeed "outstare the eagle" when their ken is directed to heaven, but which are turned away in aversion from the human countenance that would dare to deny God. Appeal not to the intellect of such a man, but to his heart; and let not even that appeal be conveyed in any fixed form of words—but let it be an appeal of the smiles and tears of affectionate and loving lips and eyes—of common joys and common griefs, whose contagion is often felt, beyond prevention or cure, where two or three are gathered together—among families thinly sprinkled over the wilderness, where, on God's own day, they repair to God's own house, a lowly building on the brae, which the Creator of suns and systems despiseth not, nor yet the beatings of the few contrite hearts therein assembled to worship Him—in the cathedral's "long-drawn aisles and fretted vaults"—in mighty multitudes all crowded in silence, as beneath the shadow of a thunder-cloud, to see some one single human being die—or swaying and swinging backwards and forwards, and to and fro, to hail a victorious armament returning from the war of Liberty, with him who hath "taken the start of this majestic world" conspicuous from afar in front, encircled with music, and with the standard of his unconquered country afloat above his head. Thus, and by many thousand other potent influences for ever at work, and from which the human heart can never make its safe escape, let it flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, to the loneliest of the multitude of the isles of the sea, are men, who vainly dream that they are Atheists, forced to feel God. Nor happens this but rarely—nor are such "angel-visits few and far between." As the most cruel have often, very often, thoughts tender as dew, so have the most dark often, very often, thoughts bright as day. The sun's golden finger writes the name of God on the clouds, rising or setting, and the Atheist, falsely so called, starts in wonder and in delight, which his soul, because it is immortal, cannot resist, to behold that Bible suddenly opened before his eyes on the sky. Or some old,

decrepit, greyhaired crone, holds out her shrivelled hand, with dim eyes patiently fixed on his, silently asking charity —silently, but in the holy name of God; and the Atheist, taken unawares, at the very core of his heart bids "God bless her," as he relieves her uncomplaining miseries.

If then Atheists do exist, and if their deathbeds may be described for the awful or melancholy instruction of their fellow-men, let them be such Atheists as those whom, let us not hesitate to say, we may blamelessly love with a troubled affection; for our Faith may not have preserved us from sins from which they are free—and we may give even to many of the qualities of their most imperfect and unhappy characters almost the name of virtues. No curses on their deathbeds will they be heard to utter. No black scowlings—no horrid gnashing of teeth—no hideous shriekings will there appal the loving ones who watch and weep by the side of him who is dying disconsolate. He will hope, and he will fear, now that there is a God indeed everywhere present—visible now in the tears that fall, audible now in the sighs that breathe for his sake—in the still small voice. That Being forgets not those by whom he has been forgotten; least of all, the poor "Fool who has said in his heart there is no God," and who knows at last that a God there is, not always in terror and trembling, but as often perhaps in the assurance of forgiveness, which, undeserved by the best of the good, may not be withheld even from the worst of the bad, if the thought of a God and a Saviour pass but for a moment through the darkness of the departing spirit—like a dove shooting swiftly, with its fair plumage, through the deep but calm darkness that follows the subsided storm.

So, too, with respect to Deists. Of unbelievers in Christianity there are many kinds—the reckless, the ignorant, the callous, the confirmed, the melancholy, the doubting, the despairing—the *good*. At their deathbeds, too, may the Christian poet, in imagination, take his stand—and there may he even hear

> "The still sad music of humanity,
> Not harsh nor grating, but of amplest power
> To soften and subdue!"

Oftener all the sounds and sights there will be full of most

rueful anguish; and that anguish will groan in the poet's lays when his human heart, relieved from its load of painful sympathies, shall long afterwards be inspired with the pity of poetry, and sing in elegies, sublime in their pathos, the sore sufferings and the dim distress that clouded and tore the dying spirit, longing, but all unable—profound though its longings be—as life's daylight is about to close upon that awful gloaming, and the night of death to descend in oblivion —to believe in the Redeemer.

Why then turn but to such deathbed, if indeed religion, and not superstition, described that scene—as that of Voltaire? Or even of Rousseau, whose dying eyes sought, in the last passion, the sight of the green earth, and the blue skies, and the sun shining so brightly, when all within the brain of his worshipper was fast growing dimmer and more dim—when all the unsatisfied spirit, that scarcely hoped a future life, knew not how it could ever take farewell of the present with tenderness enough, and enough of yearning and craving after its disappearing beauty, and when as if the whole earth were at that moment beloved even as his small peculiar birthplace—

"Et dulces moriens reminiscitur Argos."

The Christian poet, in his humane wisdom, will, for instruction's sake of his fellow-men, and for the discovery and the revealment of ever-sacred truth, keep aloof from such deathbeds as these, or take his awful stand beside them to drop the perplexed and pensive tear. For we know not what it is that we either hear or see; and holy Conscience, hearing through a confused sound, and seeing through an obscure light, fears to condemn, when perhaps she ought only to pity—to judge another, when perhaps it is her duty but to use that inward eye for her own delinquencies. He, then, who designs to benefit his kind by strains of high instruction, will turn from the deathbed of the famous Wit, whose brilliant fancy hath waxed dim as that of the clown—whose malignant heart is quaking beneath the Power it had so long derided, with terrors over which his hated Christian triumphs —and whose intellect, once so perspicacious that it could see but too well the motes that are in the sun, the specks and stains that are in the flowing robe of nature herself—prone,

in miserable contradiction to its better being, to turn them as proofs against the power and goodness of the Holy One who inhabiteth eternity—is now palsy-stricken as that of an idiot, and knows not even the sound of the name of its once vain and proud possessor—when crowded theatres had risen up with one rustle to honour, and then, with deafening acclamations,

"Raised a mortal to the skies!"

There he is—it matters not now whether on down or straw—stretched, already a skeleton, and gnashing—may it be in senselessness, for otherwise what pangs are these!—gnashing his teeth, within lips once so eloquent, now white with foam and slaver; and the whole mouth, of yore so musical, grinning ghastly like the fleshless face of fear-painted death! Is that Voltaire? He who, with wit, thought to shear the Son of God of all His beams?—with wit, to loosen the dreadful fastenings of the Cross?—with wit, to scoff at Him who hung thereon, while the blood and water came from the wound in His blessed side?—with wit, to drive away those Shadows of Angels, that were said to have rolled off the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre of the resurrection?—with wit, to deride the ineffable glory of transfigured Godhead on the Mount, and the sweet and solemn semblance of the Man Jesus in the garden?—with wit, to darken all the decrees of Providence?—and with wit,

"To shut the gates of Mercy on mankind?"

Nor yet will the Christian poet long dwell in his religious strains, though awhile he may linger there, "and from his eyelids wipe the tears that sacred pity hath engendered," beside the dying couch of Jean Jaques Rousseau—a couch of turf beneath trees—for he was ever a lover of Nature, though he loved all things living or dead as madmen love. His soul, while most spiritual, was sensual still, and with tendrils of flesh and blood embraced—even as it did embrace the balm-breathing form of voluptuous woman—the very phantoms of his most etherealised imagination. Vice stained all his virtues—as roses are seen, in some certain soils, and beneath some certain skies, always to be blighted, and their fairest petals to bear on them something like blots of blood. Over the surface of the mirror of his mind, which reflected so

much of the imagery of man and nature, there was still, here and there, on the centre or round the edges, rust-spots, that gave back no image, and marred the proportions of the beauty and the grandeur that yet shone over the rest of the circle set in the rich carved gold. His disturbed, and distracted, and defeated friendships, that all vanished in insane suspicions, and seemed to leave his soul as well satisfied in its fierce or gloomy void, as when it was filled with airy and glittering visions, are all gone for ever now. Those many thoughts and feelings—so melancholy, yet still fair, and lovely, and beautiful—which, like bright birds encaged, with ruffled and drooping wings, once so apt to soar, and their music mute, that used to make the wide woods to wring, were confined within the wires of his jealous heart—have now all flown away, and are at rest! Who sits beside the wild and wondrous genius, whose ravings entrance the world? Who wipes the death-sweat from that capacious forehead, once filled with such a multitude of disordered but aspiring fancies? Who, that his beloved air of heaven may kiss and cool it for the last time, lays open the covering that hides the marble sallowness of Rousseau's sin-and-sorrow-haunted breast? One of Nature's least-gifted children—to whose eyes nor earth nor heaven ever beamed with beauty—to whose heart were known but the meanest charities of nature; yet mean as they were, how much better in such an hour than all his imaginings most magnificent! For had he not suffered his own offspring to pass away from his eyes, even like the wood-shadows, only less beloved and less regretted? And in the very midst of the prodigality of love and passion, which he had poured out over the creations of his ever-distempered fancy, let his living children, his own flesh and blood, disappear as paupers in a chance-governed world? A world in which neither parental nor filial love were more than the names of nonentities—Father, Son, Daughter, Child, but empty syllables, which philosophy heeded not—or rather loved them in their emptiness, but despised, hated, or feared them, when for a moment they seemed pregnant with a meaning from heaven, and each in its holy utterance signifying God!

No great moral or religious lesson can well be drawn, or say rather so well, from such anomalous deathbeds, as from those of common unbelievers. To show, in all its divine

power, the blessedness of the Christian's faith, it must be compared, rather than contrasted, with the faith of the best and wisest of Deists. The ascendancy of the heavenly over the earthly will then be apparent—as apparent as the superior lustre of a star to that of a lighted-up window in the night. For above all other things in which the Christian is happier than the Deist—with the latter, the life beyond the grave is but a dark hope—to the former, "immortality has been brought to light by the Gospel." That difference embraces the whole spirit. It may be less felt—less seen when life is quick and strong; for this earth alone has much and many things to embrace and enchain our being—but in death the difference is as between night and day.

NOTE.—In the later editions of "The Omnipresence of the Deity," the passage animadverted on in the preceding chapter has been altered as follows:—

"Lo! there, in yonder spectre-haunted room,
What sightless demons horrified the gloom,
When pale and shivering, and bedew'd with fear,
The dying Sceptic felt his hour draw near!
Ere the last throes with anguish lined his cheek,
He yell'd for mercy with a hollow shriek,
Mutter'd some accents of unmeaning prayer.
Lock'd his white lips—let God the rest declare.
Go, child of Darkness! see a Christian die;
No horror pales his lip, or dims his eye;
No fiend-shaped phantoms of destruction start
The hope Religion pillows on his heart,
When with a falt'ring hand he waves adieu
To hearts as tender as their tears are true;
Meek as an infant to the mother's breast
Turns, fondly longing for its wonted rest,
So to our God the yielding soul retires,
And in one sigh of sainted peace expires."

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS AVIARY.

FIRST CANTICLE.

The present Age, which, after all, is a very pretty and pleasant one, is feelingly alive and widely awake to the manifold delights and advantages with which the study of Natural History swarms, and especially that branch of it which unfolds the character and habits, physical, moral, and intellectual, of those most interesting and admirable creatures—Birds. It is familiar not only with the shape and colour of beak, bill, claw, talon, and plume, but with the purposes for which they are designed, and with the instincts which guide their use in the beautiful economy of all-gracious Nature. We remember the time when the very word Ornithology would have required interpretation in mixed company; when a naturalist was looked on as a sort of out-of-the-way but amiable monster. Now, one seldom meets with man, woman, or child, who does not know a hawk from a handsaw, or even, to adopt the more learned reading, from a heron-shew; a black swan is no longer erroneously considered a *rara avis* any more than a black sheep; while the Glasgow Gander himself, no longer apocryphal, has taken his place in the national creed, belief in his existence being merely blended with wonder at his magnitude, and some surprise perhaps among the scientific that he should be as yet the sole specimen of that enormous Anser.

The chief cause of this advancement of knowledge in one of its most delightful departments, has been the gradual extension of its study from stale books written by men, to that book ever fresh from the hand of God. And the second—another yet the same—has been the gradual change wrought by a philosophical spirit in the observation, delineation, and arrangement of the facts and laws with which the science is

conversant, and which it exhibits in the most perfect harmony and order. Neophytes now range for themselves, according to their capacities and opportunities, the fields, woods, rivers, lakes, and seas; and proficients, no longer confining themselves to mere nomenclature, enrich their works with anecdotes and traits of character, which, without departure from truth, have imbued bird-biography with the double charm of reality and romance.

Compare the intensity and truth of any natural knowledge insensibly acquired by observation in very early youth, with that corresponding to it picked up in later life from books! In fact, the habit of distinguishing between things as different, or of similar forms, colours, and characters, formed in infancy, and childhood, and boyhood, in a free intercourse and communion with Nature, while we are merely seeking and finding the divine joy of novelty and beauty, perpetually occurring before our eyes in all her haunts, may be made the foundation of an accuracy of judgment of inappreciable value as an intellectual endowment. So entirely is this true, that we know many observant persons—that is, observant in all things intimately related with their own pursuits, and with the experience of their own early education—who, with all the pains they could take in after life, have never been able to distinguish by name, when they saw them, above half-a-dozen, if so many, of our British singing-birds; while as to knowing them by their song, that is wholly beyond the reach of their uninstructed ear, and a shilfa chants to them like a yellow yoldrin. On seeing a small bird peeping out of a hole in the eaves, and especially on hearing him chatter, they shrewdly suspect him to be a sparrow, though it does not by any means follow that their suspicions are always verified; and though, when sitting with her white breast so lovely out of the "auld clay bigging" in the window-corner, he cannot mistake Mistress Swallow, yet when flitting in fly-search over the stream, and ever and anon dipping her wing-tips in the lucid coolness, 'tis an equal chance that he misnames her Miss Marten.

What constant caution is necessary during the naturalist's perusal even of the very best books! From the very best we can only obtain knowledge at second-hand, and this, like a story circulated among village gossips, is more apt to gain in falsehood than in truth, as it passes from one to another;

but in field-study we go at once to the fountain-head, and obtain our facts pure and unalloyed by the theories and opinions of previous observers. Hence it is that the utility of books becomes obvious. You witness with your own eyes some puzzling, perplexing, strange, and unaccountable—fact; twenty different statements of it have been given by twenty different ornithologists; you consult them all, and getting a hint from one, and a hint from another, here a glimmer of light to be followed, and there a gloom of darkness to be avoided—why, who knows but that in the end you do yourself solve the mystery, and absolutely become not only happy but illustrious? People sitting in their own parlour with their feet on the fender, or in the sanctum of some museum, staring at stuffed specimens, imagine themselves naturalists; and in their presumptuous and insolent ignorance, which is often total, scorn the wisdom of the wanderers of the woods, who have for many studious and solitary years been making themselves familiar with all the beautiful mysteries of instinctive life. Take two boys, and set them respectively to pursue the two plans of study. How puzzled and perplexed will be the one who pores over the "interminable terms" of a system in books, having meanwhile no access to, or communion with nature! The poor wretch is to be pitied—nor is he anything else than a slave. But the young naturalist who takes his first lessons in the fields, observing the unrivalled scene which creation everywhere displays, is perpetually studying in the power of delight and wonder, and laying up knowledge which can be derived from no other source. The rich boy is to be envied, nor is he anything else than a king. The one sits bewildered among words, the other walks enlightened among things; the one has not even the shadow, the other more than the substance—the very essence and life of knowledge; and at twelve years old he may be a better naturalist than ever the mere bookworm will be, were he to outlive old Tommy Balmer.

In education—late or early—for heaven's sake let us never separate things and words! They are married in nature; and what God hath put together let no man put asunder—'tis a fatal divorce. Without things, words accumulated by misery in the memory, had far better die than drag out an useless existence in the dark; without words, their stay and

support, things unaccountably disappear out of the store-house, and may be for ever lost. But bind a thing with a word, a strange link, stronger than any steel, and softer than any silk, and the captive remains for ever happy in its bright prison-house. On this principle, it is indeed surprising at how early an age children can be instructed in the most interesting parts of natural history—ay, even a babe in arms. Remember Coleridge's beautiful lines to the Nightingale :—

> "That strain again !
> Full fain it would delay me ! My dear babe,
> Who, capable of no articulate sound,
> Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
> How he would place his hand beside his ear,
> His little hand, the small forefinger up,
> And bid us listen ! *and I deem it wise*
> *To make him Nature's child.*"

How we come to love the Birds of Bewick, and White, and the two Wilsons, and Montague, and Mudie, and Knapp, and Selby, and Swainson, and Audubon, and many others familiar with their haunts and habits, their affections and their passions, till we feel that they are indeed our fellow-creatures, and part of one wise and wonderful system ! If there be sermons in stones, what think ye of the hymns and psalms, matin and vesper, of the lark, who at heaven's gate sings—of the wren, who pipes her thanksgivings as the slant sunbeam shoots athwart the mossy portal of the cave, in whose fretted roof she builds her nest above the waterfall ! In cave-roof? Yea—we have seen it so—just beneath the cornice. But most frequently we have detected her procreant cradle on old mossy stump, mouldering walls or living rock—sometimes in cleft of yew-tree or hawthorn—for hang the globe with its imperceptible orifice in the sunshine or the storm, and St Catharine sits within heedless of the outer world, counting her beads with her sensitive breast that broods in bliss over the priceless pearls.

Ay, the men we have named, and many other blameless idolaters of Nature, have worshipped her in a truly religious spirit, and have taught us their religion. All our great poets have loved the *Minnesingers* of the woods—Thomson, and Cowper, and Wordsworth, as dearly as Spenser, and Shake-

speare, and Milton. From the inarticulate language of the groves, they have inhaled the enthusiasm that inspired some of the finest of their own immortal strains. "Lonely wanderer of Nature" must every poet be—and though often self-wrapt his wanderings through a spiritual world of his own, yet as some fair flower silently asks his eye to look on it, some glad bird his ear solicits with a song, how intense is then his perception—his emotion how profound—while his spirit is thus appealed to, through all its human sensibilities, by the beauty and the joy perpetual even in the most solitary places!

Our moral being owes deep obligation to all who assist us to study nature aright; for believe us, it is high and rare knowledge to know and to have the true and full use of our eyes. Millions go to the grave in old age without ever having learned it; they were just beginning, perhaps, to acquire it when they sighed to think that "they who look out of the windows were darkened;" and that, while they had been instructed how to look, sad shadows had fallen on the whole face of Nature, and that the time for those intuitions was gone for ever. But the science of seeing has now found favour in our eyes; and blessings be with them who can discover, discern, and describe the least as the greatest of Nature's works—who can see as distinctly the finger of God in the lustre of the humming-bird murmuring round a rose-bush, as in that of the star of Jove shining sole in heaven.

Take up now almost any book you may on any branch of Natural History, and instead of the endless, dry details of imaginary systems and classifications, in which the ludicrous littlenesses of man's vain ingenuity used to be set up as a sort of symbolical scheme of revelation of the sublime varieties of the inferior—as we choose to call it—creation of God, you find high attempts in an humble spirit rather to illustrate tendencies, and uses, and harmonies, and order, and design. With some glorious exceptions, indeed, the naturalists of the day gone by showed us a science that was but a skeleton—little but dry bones; with some inglorious exceptions, indeed, the naturalists of the day that is now, have been desirous to show us a living, breathing, and moving body—to explain, as far as they might, its mechanism and its spirit. Ere another century elapse, how familiar may men be with all the families

of the flowers of the field, and the birds of the air, with all the interdependencies of their characters and their kindreds, perhaps even with the mystery of that instinct which now is seen working wonders, not only beyond the power of reason to comprehend, but of imagination to conceive!

How deeply enshrouded are felt to be the mysteries of Nature, when, thousands of years after Aristotle, we hear Audubon confess his utter ignorance of what migrations and non-migrations mean—that 'tis hard to understand why such general laws as these should be—though their benign operation is beautifully seen in the happiness provided alike for all—whether they reside in their own comparatively small localities, nor ever wish to leave them—or at stated seasons instinctively fly away over thousands of miles, to drop down and settle for a while on some spot adapted to their necessities, of which they had prescience afar off, though seemingly wafted thither like leaves upon the wind! Verily, as great a mystery is that Natural Religion by the theist studied in woods and on mountains and by sea-shores, as that Revelation which philosophers will not believe because they do not understand—"the blinded bigot's scorn" deriding man's highest and holiest happiness—Faith!

We must not now go a bird-nesting, but first time we do we shall put Bishop Mant's "Months" in our pocket. The good Bishop—who must have been an indefatigable bird-nester in his boyhood—though we answer for him that he never stole but one egg out of four, and left undisturbed the callow young—treats of those beauteous and wondrous structures in a style that might make Professor Rennie jealous, who has written like a Vitruvius on the architecture of birds. He expatiates with uncontrolled delight on the unwearied activity of the architects, who, without any apprenticeship to the trade, are journeymen, nay, master-builders, the first spring of their full-fledged lives; with no other tools but a bill, unless we count their claws, which however seem, and that only in some kinds, to be used but in carrying materials. With their breasts and whole bodies, indeed, most of them round off the soft insides of their procreant cradles, till they fit each brooding bunch of feathers to a hairbreadth, as it sits close and low on eggs or eyeless young, a *leetle* higher raised up above their gaping babies, as they wax from downy infancy into

plumier childhood, which they do how swiftly! and how soon have they flown! You look some sunny morning into the bush, and the abode in which they seemed so *cosy* the day before is utterly forsaken by the joyous ingrates—now feebly fluttering in the narrow grove, to them a wide world teeming with delight and wonder—to be thought of never more. With all the various materials used by them in building their different domiciles, the Bishop is as familiar as with the sole material of his own wig—though, by the by, last time we had the pleasure of seeing and sitting by him, he wore his own hair—"but that not much;" for, like our own, his sconce was bald, and, like it, showed the organ of constructiveness as fully developed as Christopher or a Chaffinch. He is perfectly well acquainted, too, with all the diversities of their modes of building—their orders of architecture—and eke with all those of situation chosen by the kinds—whether seemingly simple, in cunning that deceives by a show of carelessness and heedlessness of notice, or with craft of concealment that baffles the most searching eye—hanging their beloved secret in gloom not impervious to sun and air—or, trustful in man's love of his own home, affixing the nest beneath the eaves, or in the flowers of the lattice, kept shut for their sakes, or half-opened by fair hands of virgins whose eyes gladden with heart-born brightness as each morning they mark the growing beauty of the brood, till they smile to see one almost as large as its parent sitting on the rim of the nest, when all at once it hops over, and, as it flutters away like a leaf, seems surprised that it can fly!

Yet there are still a few wretched quacks among us whom we may some day perhaps drive down into the dirt. There are idiots who will not even suffer sheep, cows, horses, and dogs, to escape the disgusting perversions of their anile anecdotage—who, by all manner of drivelling lies, libel even the common domestic fowl, and impair the reputation of the bantam. Newspapers are sometimes so infested by the trivial trash, that in the nostrils of a naturalist they smell on the breakfast-table like rotten eggs; and there are absolutely volumes of the slaver bound in linen, and lettered with the names of the expectorators on the outside, resembling annuals—we almost fear with prints. In such hands, the ass loses his natural attributes, and takes the character of his owner; and

as the anecdote-monger is seen astride on his cuddy, you wonder what may be the meaning of the apparition, for we defy you to distinguish the one donk from the other, the rider from the ridden, except by the more inexpressive countenance of the one, and the ears of the other in uncomputed longitude dangling or erect.

We can bear this libellous gossip least patiently of all with birds. If a ninny have some stories about a wonderful goose, let him out with them, and then waddle away with his fat friend into the stackyard—where they may take sweet counsel together in the "fause-house." Let him, with open mouth and grozet eyes, say what he chooses of "Pretty Poll," as she clings in her cage, by beak or claws, to stick or wire, and in her naughty vocabulary let him hear the impassioned eloquence of an Aspasia inspiring a Pericles. But, unless his crown itch for the Crutch, let him spare the linnet on the briery bush among the broom—the laverock on the dewy braird or in the rosy cloud—the swan on her shadow—the eagle in his eyrie, in the sun, or at sea.

The great ornithologists and the true are the authorities that are constantly correcting those errors of popular opinion about the fowls of the air, which in every country, contrary to the evidence of the senses, and in spite of observations that may be familiar to all, gain credence with the weak and ignorant, and in process of time compose even a sort of system of the vilest superstition. It would be a very curious inquiry to trace the operation of the causes that, in different lands, have produced with respect to birds national prejudices of admiration or contempt, love or even hatred; and in doing so, we should have to open up some strange views of the influence of imagination on the head and heart. It may be remarked that an excuse will be generally found for such fallacies in the very sources from which they spring; but no excuse can be found—on the contrary, in every sentence the fool scribbles, a glaring argument is shown in favour of his being put to a lingering and cruel death—the fool who keeps gossiping every week in the year, penny-a-line-wise, with a gawky face and a mawkish mind, about God's creatures to whom reason has been denied, but instinct given, in order that they may be happy on moor and mountain, in the hedge-roots and on the tops of heaven-kissing trees—by the side of rills

whose sweet low voice gives no echo in the wild, and on the hollow thunder of seas on which they sit in safety around the sinking ship, or from all her shrieks flee away to some island and are at rest.

Turn to the true Ornithologist, and how beautiful, each in the adaptation of its own structure to its own life, every bird that walks the land, wades the water, or skims the air! In his pages, pictured by pen or pencil, all is wondrous—as nature ever is to

"The quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on its own heart,"

even while gazing on the inferior creatures of that creation to which we belong, and are linked in being's mysterious chain —till our breath, like theirs, expire. All is wondrous—but nothing monstrous in his delineations—for the more we know of nature in her infinite varieties, her laws reveal themselves to us in more majestic simplicity, and we are inspired with awe, solemn but sweet, by the incomprehensible, yet in part comprehended, magnificence of Truth. The writings of such men are the gospel of nature—and if the apocrypha be bound up along with it—'tis well; for in it, too, there is felt to be inspiration—and when, in good time, purified from error, the leaves all make but one Bible.

Hark to the loud, clear, mellow, bold song of the Blackbird. There he flits along upon a strong wing, with his yellow bill visible in distance, and disappears in the silent wood. Not long silent. It is a spring-day in our imagination—his clay-wall nest holds his mate at the foot of the Silver-fir, and he is now perched on its pinnacle. That thrilling hymn will go vibrating down the stem till it reaches her brooding breast. The whole vernal air is filled with the murmur and the glitter of insects; but the blackbird's song is over all other symptoms of love and life, and seems to call upon the leaves to unfold into happiness. It is on that one Tree-top, conspicuous among many thousands on the fine breast of wood—here and there, a pine mingling not unmeetly with the prevailing oak—that the forest-minstrel sits in his inspirations. The rock above is one which we have often climbed. There lies the glorious Loch and all its islands—one dearer than the rest to eye and imagination, with its old Religious House—year

after year crumbling away unheeded into more entire ruin. Far away, a sea of mountains, with all their billowing summits distinct in the sky, and now uncertain and changeful as the clouds. Yonder Castle stands well on the peninsula among the trees which the herons inhabit. Those coppice-woods on the other shore, stealing up to the heathery rocks and sprinkled birches, are the haunts of the roe. That great glen, that stretches sullenly away into the distant darkness, has been for ages the birth and the death-place of the red-deer. The cry of an Eagle! There he hangs poised in the sunlight, and now he flies off towards the sea. But again the song of our Blackbird rises like "a steam of rich distilled perfumes," and our heart comes back to him upon the pinnacle of his own Home-tree. The source of song is yet in the happy creature's heart—but the song itself has subsided, like a rivulet that has been rejoicing in a sudden shower among the hills; the bird drops down among the balmy branches, and the other faint songs which that bold anthem had drowned, are heard at a distance, and seem to encroach every moment on the silence.

You say you greatly prefer the song of the Thrush. Pray, why set such delightful singers by the ears? We dislike the habit that very many people have of trying everything by a scale. Nothing seems to them to be good positively—only relatively. Now, it is true wisdom to be charmed with what is charming, to live in it for the time being, and compare the emotion with no former emotion whatever—unless it be unconsciously in the working of an imagination set agoing by delight. Although, therefore, we cannot say that we prefer the Thrush to the Blackbird, yet we agree with you in thinking him a most delightful bird. Where a Thrush is, we defy you to anticipate his song in the morning. He is indeed an early riser. By the way, Chanticleer is far from being so. You hear him crowing away from shortly after midnight, and, in your simplicity, may suppose him to be up and strutting about the premises. Far from it;—he is at that very moment perched in his polygamy, between two of his fattest wives. The sultan will perhaps not stir a foot for several hours to come; while all the time the Thrush, having long ago rubbed his eyes, is on his topmost twig, broad awake, and charming the ear of dawn with his beautiful vociferation. During mid-

day he disappears, and is mute; but again, at dewy even, as at dewy morn, he pours his pipe like a prodigal, nor ceases sometimes when night has brought the moon and stars.

Best beloved, and most beautiful of all Thrushes that ever broke from the blue-spotted shell!—thou who, for five springs, hast "hung thy procreant cradle" among the roses, and honeysuckles, and ivy, and clematis that embower in bloom the lattice of our Cottage-study—how farest thou now in the snow? Consider the whole place as your own, my dear bird; and remember, that when the gardener's children sprinkle food for you and yours all along your favourite haunts, that it is done by our orders. And when all the earth is green again, and all the sky blue, you will welcome us to our rural domicile, with light feet running before us among the winter leaves, and then skim away to your new nest in the old spot, then about to be somewhat more cheerful in the undisturbing din of the human life within the flowery walls.

Nay—how can we forget what is for ever before our eyes! Blessed be Thou—on thy shadowy bed, belonging equally to earth and heaven—O Isle! who art called the Beautiful! and who of thyself canst make all the Lake one floating Paradise—even were her shore-hills sylvan no more—groveless the bases of all her remoter mountains—effaced that loveliest splendour, sun-painted on their sky-piercing cliffs. And can it be that we have forsaken Thee! Fairy-land and Love-land of our youth! Hath imagination left our brain, and passion our heart, so that we can bear banishment from Thee and yet endure life! Such loss not yet is ours—witness these gushing tears. But Duty, "stern daughter of the voice of God," dooms us to breathe our morning and evening orisons far from hearing and sight of Thee, whose music and whose light continue gladdening other ears and other eyes—as if ours had there never listened—and never gazed. As if thy worshipper—and sun! moon! and stars! he asks ye if he loved not you and your images—as if thy worshipper—O Windermere! were—dead! And does duty dispense no reward to them who sacrifice at her bidding what was once the very soul of life? Yes! an exceeding great reward—ample as the heart's desire—for contentment is borne of obedience—where no repinings are, the wings of thought are imped beyond the power of the eagle's plumes; and happy are we now—with

the human smiles and voices we love even more than thine, thou fairest region of nature! happier than when we rippled in our pinnace through the billowy moonlight—than when we sat alone on the mountain within the thunder-cloud.

Why do the songs of the Blackbird and Thrush make us think of the songless STARLING? It matters not. We do think of him, and see him too—a lovable bird, and his abode is majestic. What an object of wonder and awe is an old Castle to a boyish imagination! Its height how dreadful! up to whose mouldering edges his fear carries him, and hangs him over the battlements! What beauty in those unapproachable wall flowers, that cast a brightness on the old brown stones of the edifice, and make the horror pleasing! That sound so far below, is the sound of a stream the eye cannot reach—of a waterfall echoing for ever among the black rocks and pools. The schoolboy knows but little of the history of the old Castle—but that little is of war, and witchcraft, and imprisonment, and bloodshed. The ghostly glimmer of antiquity appals him—he visits the ruin only with a companion, and at midday. There and then it was that we first saw a Starling. We heard something wild and wonderful in their harsh scream, as they sat upon the edge of the battlements, or flew out of the chinks and crannies. There were Martens too, so different in their looks from the pretty House-Swallows—Jack-daws clamouring afresh at every time we waved our caps, or vainly slung a pebble towards their nests —and one grove of elms, to whose top, much lower than the castle, came, ever and anon, some noiseless Heron from the Muirs.

Ruins! Among all the external objects of imagination, surely they are most affecting! Some sumptuous edifice of a former age, still standing in its undecayed strength, has undoubtedly a great command over us, from the ages that have flowed over it; but the mouldering edifice which Nature has begun to win to herself, and to dissolve into her own bosom, is far more touching to the heart, and more awakening to the spirit. It is beautiful in its decay—not merely because green leaves, and wild flowers, and creeping mosses soften its rugged frowns, but because they have sown themselves on the decay of greatness; they are monitors to our fancy, like the flowers on a grave, of the untroubled rest of the dead. Bat-

tlements riven by the hand of time, and cloistered arches reft and rent, speak to us of the warfare and of the piety of our ancestors, of the pride of their might, and the consolations of their sorrow: they revive dim shadows of departed life, evoked from the land of forgetfulness; but they touch us more deeply when the brightness which the sun flings on the broken arches, and the warbling of birds that are nestled in the chambers of princes, and the moaning of winds through the crevices of towers, round which the surges of war were shattered and driven back, lay those phantoms again to rest in their silent bed, and show us, in the monuments of human life and power, the visible footsteps of Time and Oblivion coming on in their everlasting and irresistible career, to sweep down our perishable race, and to reduce all the forms of our momentary being into the undistinguishable elements of their original nothing.

What is there below the skies like the place of mighty and departed cities? the vanishing or vanished capitals of renowned empires? There is no other such desolation. The solitudes of nature may be wild and drear, but they are not like the solitude from which human glory is swept away. The overthrow or decay of mighty human power is, of all thoughts that can enter the mind, the most overwhelming. The whole imagination is at once stirred by the prostration of that, round which so many high associations have been collected for so many ages. Beauty seems born but to perish, and its fragility is seen and felt to be inherent in it by a law of its being. But power gives stability, as it were, to human thought, and we forget our own perishable nature in the spectacle of some abiding and enduring greatness. Our own little span of years—our own confined region of space—are lost in the endurance and far-spread dominion of some mighty state, and we feel as if we partook of its deep-set and triumphant strength. When, therefore, a great and ancient empire falls into pieces, or when fragments of its power are heard rent asunder, like column after column disparting from some noble edifice, in sad conviction, we feel as if all the cities of men were built on foundations beneath which the earthquake sleeps. The same doom seems to be imminent over all the other kingdoms that still stand; and in the midst of such changes, and decays, and overthrows—or as we read

of them of old—we look, under such emotions, on all power as foundationless, and in our wide imagination embrace empires covered only with the ruins of their desolation. Yet such is the pride of the human spirit, that it often unconsciously, under the influence of such imagination, strives to hide from itself the utter nothingness of its mightiest works. And when all its glories are visibly crumbling into dust, it creates some imaginary power to overthrow the fabrics of human greatness—and thus attempts to derive a kind of mournful triumph even in its very fall. Thus, when nations have faded away in their sins and vices, rotten at the heart and palsied in all their limbs, we strive not to think of that sad internal decay, but imagine some mighty power smiting empires and cutting short the records of mortal magnificence. Thus Fate and Destiny are said in our imagination to lay our glories low. Thus, even the calm and silent air of Oblivion has been thought of as an unsparing Power. Time, too, though in moral sadness wisely called a shadow, has been clothed with terrific attributes, and the sweep of his scythe has shorn the towery diadem of cities. Thus the mere sigh in which we expire, has been changed into active power—and all the nations have with one voice called out "Death!" And while mankind have sunk, and fallen, and disappeared in the helplessness of their own mortal being, we have still spoken of powers arrayed against them—powers that are in good truth only another name for their own weaknesses. Thus imagination is for ever fighting against truth—and even when humbled, her visions are sublime—conscious even amongst saddest ruin of her own immortality.

Higher and higher than ever rose the tower of Belus, uplifted by ecstasy, soars the Lark, the lyrical poet of the sky. Listen, listen! and the more remote the bird the louder seems his hymn in heaven. He seems, in such altitude, to have left the earth for ever, and to have forgotten his lowly nest. The primroses and the daisies, and all the sweet hill-flowers, must be unremembered in that lofty region of light. But just as the Lark is lost—he and his song together—as if his orisons had been accepted—both are seen and heard fondly wavering earthwards, and in a little while he is walking with his graceful crest contented along the furrows of the brairded corn, or on the clover lea that in man's memory has not felt

the ploughshare; or after a pause, in which he seems dallying with a home-sick passion, drooping down like one dead, beside his mate in her shallow nest.

Of all birds to whom is given dominion over the air, the Lark alone lets loose the power that is in his wings only for the expression of love and gratitude. The eagle sweeps in passion of hunger—poised in the sky his ken is searching for prey on sea or sward—his flight is ever animated by destruction. The dove seems still to be escaping from something that pursues—afraid of enemies even in the dangerless solitudes where the old forests repose in primeval peace. The heron, high over houseless moors, seems at dusk fearful in her laborious flight, and weariedly gathers her long wings on the tree-top, as if thankful that day is done, and night again ready with its rest. "The blackening trains o' craws to their repose" is an image that affects the heart of "mortal man who liveth here by toil," through sympathy with creatures partaking with him a common lot. The swallow, for ever on the wing, and wheeling fitfully before fancy's eyes in element adapted for perpetual pastime, is flying but to feed—for lack of insects prepares to forsake the land of its nativity, and yearns for the blast to bear it across the sea. Thou alone, O Lark! hast wings given thee that thou mayest be perfectly happy—none other bird but thou can at once soar and sing—and heavenward thou seemest to be borne, not more by those twinkling pinions than by the ever-varying, ever-deepening melody effusing from thy heart.

How imagination unifies! then most intensive when working with and in the heart. Who thinks, when profoundly listening with his eyes shut to the warbling air, that there is another lark in creation? *The* lark—sole as the season—or the rainbow. We can fancy he sings to charm our own particular ear—to please us descends into silence—for our sakes erects his crest as he walks confidingly near our feet. Not till the dream-circle, of which ourselves are the centre, dissolves or subsides, do the fairest sights and sweetest sounds in nature lose their relationship to us the beholder and hearer, and relapse into the common property of all our kind. To self appertains the whole sensuous as well as the whole spiritual world. Egoism is the creator of all beauty and all bliss, of all hope and of all faith. Even thus doth imagination unify

Sabbath worship. All our beloved Scotland is to the devout breast on that day one House of God. Each congregation—however far apart—hears but one hymn—sympathy with all is an all-comprehensive self—and Christian love of our brethren is evolved from the conviction that we have ourselves a soul to be saved or lost.

Yet, methinks, imagination loveth just as well to pursue an opposite process, and to furnish food to the heart in separate picture after separate picture, one and all imbued not with the same but congenial sentiment, and therefore succeeding one another at her will, be her will intimated by mild bidding or imperial command. In such mood imagination, in still series, visions a thousand parish-kirks, each with its own characteristic localities, Sabbath-sanctified; distributes the beauty of that hallowed day in allotments all over the happy land—so that in one Sabbath there are a thousand Sabbaths.

Keep carolling, then, all together, ye countless Larks, till heaven is one hymn! Imagination thinks she sees each particular field that sends up its own singer to the sky—the spot of each particular nest. And of the many hearts all over loveliest Scotland in the sweet vernal season a-listening your lays, she is with the quiet beatings of the happy, with the tumult in them that would wish to break! The little maiden by the well in the brae-side above the cottage, with the Bible on her knees, left in tendance of an infant—the palsied crone placed safely in the sunshine till after service—the sickly student meditating in the shade, and somewhat sadly thinking that these spring flowers are the last his eyes may see—lovers walking together on the Sabbath before their marriage to the house of God—life-wearied wanderers without a home—remorseful men touched by the innocent happiness they cannot help hearing in heaven—the sceptic—the unbeliever—the atheist to whom "hope comes not that comes to all." What different meanings to such different auditors hath the same music at the same moment filling the same sky!

Does the Lark ever sing in winter? Ay, sometimes January is visited with a May-day hour; and in the genial glimpse, though the earth be yet barer than the sky, the Lark, mute for months, feels called on by the sun to sing, not so near to heaven's gate, and a shorter than vernal lyric, or during that sweetest season when neither he nor you can say whether it

is summer or but spring. Unmated yet, nor of mate solicitous, in pure joy of heart he cannot refrain from ascent and song; but the snow-clouds look cold, and ere he has mounted as high again as the church-spire, the aimless impulse dies, and he comes wavering down silently to the yet unprimrosed brae.

In our boyish days, we never felt that the Spring had really come till the clear-singing Lark went careering before our gladdened eyes away up to heaven. Then all the earth wore a vernal look, and the ringing sky said, "Winter is over and gone." As we roamed, on a holiday, over the wide pastoral moors, to angle in the lochs and pools, unless the day were very cloudy the song of some lark or other was still warbling aloft, and made a part of our happiness. The creature could not have been more joyful in the skies than we were on the greensward. We, too, had our wings, and flew through our holiday. Thou soul of glee! who still leddest our flight in all our pastimes—representative child of Erin!—wildest of the wild—brightest of the bright—boldest of the bold!—the lark-loved vales in their stillness were no home for thee. The green glens of ocean, created by swelling and subsiding storms, or by calms around thy ship transformed into immeasurable plains, they filled thy fancy with images dominant over the memories of the steadfast earth. The petterel and the halcyon were the birds the sailor loved, and he forgot the songs of the inland woods in the moanings that haunt the very heart of the tumultuous sea. Of that ship nothing was ever known but that she perished. He, too, the grave and thoughtful English boy, whose exquisite scholarship we all so enthusiastically admired, without one single particle of hopeless envy—and who accompanied us on all our wildest expeditions, rather from affection to his playmates than any love of their sports — he who, timid and unadventurous as he seemed to be, yet rescued little Marian of the Brae from a drowning death when so many grown-up men stood aloof in selfish fear—gone, too, for ever art thou, our beloved Edward Harrington! and, after a few brilliant years in the Oriental clime,

——"on Hoogley's banks afar,
Looks down on thy lone tomb the Evening Star."

How genius shone o'er thy fine features, yet how pale thou ever wast; thou who sat'st then by the Sailor's side, and

listened to his sallies with a mournful smile—friend! dearest to our soul! loving us far better than we deserved; for though faultless thou, yet tolerant of all our frailties—and in those days of hope from thy lips how elevating was praise! Yet how seldom do we think of thee! For months—years—not at all—not once—sometimes not even when by some chance we hear your name! It meets our eyes written on books that once belonged to you and that you gave us—and yet of yourself it recalls no image. Yet we sank down to the floor on hearing thou wast dead—ungrateful to thy memory for many years we were not—but it faded away till we forgot thee utterly, except when sleep showed thy grave!

Methinks we hear the song of the Grey Linnie, the darling bird of Scotland. None other is more tenderly sung of in our old ballads. When the simple and fervent love-poets of our pastoral times first applied to the maiden the words, "my bonnie burdie," they must have been thinking of the Grey Linnie—its plumage ungaudy and soberly pure—its shape elegant yet unobtrusive—and its song various without any effort—now rich, gay, sprightly, but never rude nor riotous—now tender, almost mournful, but never gloomy or desponding. So, too, are all its habits, endearing and delightful. It is social, yet not averse to solitude, singing often in groups, and as often by itself in the furze brake, or on the briery knoll. You often find the linnie's nest in the most solitary places—in some small self-sown clump of trees by the brink of a wild hill-stream, or on the tangled edge of a forest; and just as often you find it in the hedgerow of the cottage garden, or in a bower within, or even in an old gooseberry bush that has grown into a sort of tree.

One wild and beautiful place we well remember—ay, the very bush in which we first found a grey linnie's nest—for in our parish, from some cause or other, it was rather a rarish bird. That far-away day is as distinct as the present now. Imagine, friend, first, a little well surrounded with wild cresses on the moor; something like a rivulet flows from it, or rather you see a deep tinge of verdure, the line of which, you believe, must be produced by the oozing moisture—you follow it, and by-and-by there is a descent palpable to your feet—then you find yourself between low broomy knolls, that, heightening every step, become ere long banks, and braes, and hills. You

are surprised now to see a stream, and look round for its source—and there seem now to be a hundred small sources in fissures and springs on every side—you hear the murmurs of its course over beds of sand and gravel—and hark, a waterfall! A tree or two begins to shake its tresses on the horizon—a birch or a rowan. You get ready your angle—and by the time you have panniered three dozen, you are at a wooden bridge—you fish the pool above it with the delicate dexterity of a Boaz, capture the monarch of the flood, and on lifting your eyes from his starry side as he gasps his last on the silvery shore, you behold a Cottage, at one gable-end an ash, at the other a sycamore, and standing perhaps at the lonely door, a maiden like a fairy or an angel.

This is the Age of Confessions; and why, therefore, may we not make a confession of first-love? We had finished our sixteenth year—and we were almost as tall as we are now; for our figure was then straight as an arrow, and almost like an arrow in its flight. We had given over bird-nesting—but we had not ceased to visit the dell where first we found the Grey Lintie's brood. Tale-writers are told by critics to remember that the young shepherdesses of Scotland are not beautiful as the fictions of a poet's dream. But SHE was beautiful beyond poetry. She was so then, when passion and imagination were young—and her image, her undying, unfading image, is so now, when passion and imagination are old, and when from eye and soul have disappeared much of the beauty and glory both of nature and life. We loved her from the first moment that our eyes met—and we see their light at this moment—the same soft, burning light, that set body and soul on fire. She was but a poor shepherd's daughter; but what was that to us, when we heard her voice singing one of her old plaintive ballads among the braes?—When we sat down beside her—when the same plaid was drawn over our shoulders in the rain-storm—when we asked her for a kiss, and was not refused—for what had she to fear in her beauty, and her innocence, and her filial piety?—and were we not a mere boy, in the bliss of passion, ignorant of deceit or dishonour, and with a heart open to the eyes of all as to the gates of heaven? What music was in that stream! Could "Sabean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest" so penetrate our soul, as that breath, balmier than the broom on which we sat, forgetful of all other human

life! Father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts, and cousins, and all the tribe of friends that would throw us off—if we should be so base and mad as to marry a low-born, low-bred, ignorant, uneducated, crafty, ay, crafty and designing beggar—were all forgotten in our delirium—if indeed it were delirium—and not an everlastingly-sacred devotion to nature and to truth. For in what were we deluded? A voice—a faint and dewy voice—deadened by the earth that fills up her grave, and by the turf that, at this very hour, is expanding its primroses to the dew of heaven—answers, "In nothing!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" exclaims some reader in derision. "Here's an attempt at the pathetic!—a miserable attempt indeed; for who cares about the death of a mean hut girl?—we are sick of low life." Why, as to that matter, who cares for the death of any one mortal being? Who weeps for the death of the late Emperor of all the Russias? Who wept over Napoleon the Great? When Chatham or Burke, Pitt or Fox died—don't pretend to tell lies about a nation's tears. And if yourself, who, perhaps, are not in low life, were to die in half an hour (don't be alarmed), all who knew you—except two or three of your bosom friends, who, partly from being somewhat dull, and partly from wishing to be decent, might whine—would walk along George Street, at the fashionable hour of three, the very day after your funeral. Nor would it ever enter their heads to abstain from a dinner at the Club, ordered perhaps by yourself a fortnight ago, at which time you were in rude health, merely because you had foolishly allowed a cold to fasten upon your lungs, and carry you off in the prime and promise of your professional life. In spite of all your critical slang, therefore, Mr Editor, or Master Contributor to some Literary Journal, SHE, though a poor *Scottish Herd*, was most beautiful; and when, but a week after taking farewell of her, we went, according to our tryst, to fold her in our arms, and was told by her father that she was dead,—ay, dead—that she had no existence—that she was in a coffin,—when we awoke from the dead-fit in which we had lain on the floor of that cottage, and saw her in her grave-clothes within an hour to be buried—when we stood at her burial—and knew that never more were we or the day to behold her presence—we learned then how immeasurably misery can surpass happiness—that the soul is ignorant of its own being, till all at

once a thunder-stone plunges down its depths, and groans gurgle upwards upbraiding heaven.

How easily can the heart change its mood from the awful to the solemn—from the solemn to the sweet—and from the sweet to the gay—while the mirth of this careless moment is unconsciously tempered by the influence of that holy hour that has subsided but not died, and continues to colour the most ordinary emotion, as the common things of earth look all lovelier in imbibed light, even after the serene moon that had yielded it is no more visible in her place! Most gentle are such transitions in the calm of nature and of the heart; all true poetry is full of them; and in music how pleasant are they, or how affecting! Those alternations of tears and smiles, of fervent aspirations and of quiet thoughts! The organ and the Æolian harp! As the one has ceased pealing praise, we can list the other whispering it—nor feels the soul any loss of emotion in the change—still true to itself and its wondrous nature—just as it is so when from the sunset clouds it turns its eyes to admire the beauty of a dewdrop or an insect's wing.

Now, we hear many of our readers crying out against the barbarity of confining the free denizens of the air in wire or wicker Cages. Gentle readers, do, we pray, keep your compassion for other objects. Or, if you are disposed to be argumentative with us, let us just walk down stairs to the larder, and tell the public truly what we there behold—three brace of partridges, two ditto of moorfowl, a cock pheasant, poor fellow,—a man and his wife of the aquatic or duck kind, and a woodcock, vainly presenting his long Christmas bill,—

> "Some sleeping kill'd—
> All murder'd."

Why, you are indeed a most logical reasoner, and a most considerate Christian, when you launch out into an invective against the cruelty exhibited in our Cages. Let us leave this den of murder, and have a glass of our home-made frontignac in our own Sanctum. Come, come, sir,—look on this newly-married couple of Canaries.—The architecture of their nest is certainly not of the florid order, but my Lady Yellowlees sits on it a well-satisfied bride. Come back in a day or two, and you will see her nursing triplets. Meanwhile, hear

the ear-piercing fife of the bridegroom !—Where will you find a set of happier people, unless perhaps it be in our parlour, or our library, or our nursery? For, to tell you the truth, there is a cage or two in almost every room of the house. Where is the cruelty—here, or in your blood-stained larder? But you must eat, you reply. We answer—not necessarily birds. The question is about birds—cruelty to birds; and were that sagacious old wild-goose, whom one single moment of heedlessness brought last Wednesday to your hospitable board, at this moment alive, to bear a part in our conversation, can you dream that, with all your ingenuity and eloquence, you could persuade him—the now defunct and disjected—that you had been under the painful necessity of eating him with stuffing and apple-sauce?

It is not in nature that an ornithologist should be cruel—he is most humane. Mere skin-stuffers are not ornithologists—and we have known more than one of that tribe who would have had no scruple in strangling their own mothers, or reputed fathers. Yet if your true ornithologist cannot catch a poor dear bird alive, he must kill it—and leave you to weep for its death. There must be a few victims out of myriads of millions—and thousands and tens of thousands are few; but the ornithologist knows the seasons when death is least afflictive—he is merciful in his wisdom—for the spirit of knowledge is gentle—and "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," reconcile him to the fluttering and ruffled plumage blood-stained by death. 'Tis hard, for example, to be obliged to shoot a Zenaida dove! Yet a Zenaida dove must die for Audubon's Illustrations. How many has he loved in life, and tenderly preserved! And how many more pigeons of all sorts, cooked in all styles, have you devoured—ay, twenty for his one—you being a glutton and epicure in the same inhuman form, and he being contented at all times with the plainest fare—a salad perhaps of water-cresses plucked from a spring in the forest glade, or a bit of pemmican, or a wafer of portable soup melted in the pot of some squatter—and shared with the admiring children before a drop has been permitted to touch his own abstemious lips.

The intelligent author of the "Treatise on British Birds" does not condescend to justify the right we claim to encage them; but he shows his genuine humanity in instructing us

how to render happy and healthful their imprisonment. He says very prettily, "What are town gardens and shrubberies in squares, but an attempt to ruralise the city? So strong is the desire in man to participate in country pleasures, that he tries to bring some of them even to his room. Plants and birds are sought after with avidity, and cherished with delight. With flowers he endeavours to make his apartments resemble a garden; and thinks of groves and fields, as he listens to the wild sweet melody of his little captives. Those who keep and take an interest in song-birds, are often at a loss how to treat their little warblers during illness, or to prepare the proper food best suited to their various constitutions; but that knowledge is absolutely necessary to preserve these little creatures in health: for want of it, young amateurs and bird-fanciers have often seen, with regret, many of their favourite birds perish."

Now, here we confess is a good physician. In Edinburgh we understand there are about five hundred medical practitioners on the human race—and we have dog-doctors, and horse-doctors, who come out in numbers—but we have no bird-doctors. Yet often, too often, when the whole house rings, from garret to cellar, with the cries of children teething, or in the hooping-cough, the little linnet sits silent on his perch, a moping bunch of feathers, and then falls down dead, when his lilting life might have been saved by the simplest medicinal food skilfully administered. Surely if we have physicians to attend our treadmills, and regulate the diet and day's work of merciless ruffians, we should not suffer our innocent and useful prisoners thus to die unattended. Why do not the ladies of Edinburgh form themselves into a Society for this purpose?

Not one of all the philosophers in the world has been able to tell us what is happiness. Sterne's Starling is weakly supposed to have been miserable. Probably he was one of the most contented birds in the universe. Does confinement —the closest, most uncompanioned confinement—make one of ourselves unhappy? Is the shoemaker, sitting with his head on his knees, in a hole in the wall from morning to night, in any respect to be pitied? Is the solitary orphan, that sits all day sewing in a garret, while the old woman for whom she works is out washing, an object of compassion? or the widow

of fourscore, hurkling over the embers, with the stump of a pipe in her toothless mouth? Is it so sad a thing indeed to be alone? or to have one's motions circumscribed within the narrowest imaginable limits? Nonsense all!

Then, gentle reader, were you ever in a Highland shieling? Often since you read our Recreations. It is built of turf, and is literally alive; for the beautiful heather is blooming, wild-flowers and walls and roof are one sound of bees. The industrious little creatures must have come several long miles for their balmy spoil. There is but one human creature in that shieling, but he is not at all solitary. He no more wearies of that lonesome place than do the sunbeams or the shadows. To himself alone he chants his old Gaelic songs, or frames wild ditties of his own to the raven or red-deer. Months thus pass on; and he descends again to the lower country. Perhaps he goes to the wars—fights—bleeds—and returns to Badenoch or Lochaber; and once more, blending in his imagination the battles of his own regiment, in Egypt, Spain, or Flanders, with the deeds done of yore by Ossian sung, sits contented by the door of the same shieling, restored and beautified, in which he had dreamt away the summers of his youth.

What has become—we wonder—of Dartmoor Prison? During that long war its huge and hideous bulk was filled with Frenchmen—ay,

"Men of all climes—attach'd to none—were there;"

—a desperate race—robbers and reavers, and ruffians and rapers, and pirates and murderers—mingled with the heroes who, fired by freedom, had fought for the land of lilies, with its vine-vales and "hills of sweet myrtle"—doomed to die in captivity, immured in that doleful mansion on the sullen moor. There thousands pined and wore away and wasted—and when not another groan remained within the bones of their breasts, they gave up the ghost. Young heroes prematurely old in baffled passions—life's best and strongest passions, that scorned to go to sleep but in the sleep of death. These died in their golden prime. With them went down into unpitied and unhonoured graves—for pity and honour dwell not in houses so haunted—veterans in their iron age—some self-smitten with ghastly wounds that let life finally bubble

out of sinewy neck or shaggy bosom—or the poison-bowl convulsed their giant limbs unto unquivering rest. Yet there you saw a wild strange tumult of troubled happiness—which, as you looked into its heart, was transfigured into misery. There volatile spirits fluttered in their cage, like birds that seem not to hate nor to be unhappy in confinement, but, hanging by beak or claws, to be often playing with the glittering wires—to be amusing themselves, so it seems, with drawing up, by small enginery, their food and drink, which soon sickens, however, on their stomachs, till, with ruffled plumage, they are often found in the morning lying on their backs, with clenched feet, and neck bent as if twisted, on the scribbled sand, stone-dead. There you saw pale youths—boys almost like girls, so delicate looked they in that hot infected air which, ventilate it as you will, is never felt to breathe on the face like the fresh air of liberty—once bold and bright midshipmen in frigate or first-rater, and saved by being picked up by the boats of the ship that had sunk her by one double-shotted broadside, or sent her in one explosion splintering into the sky, and splashing into the sea, in less than a minute the thunder silent, and the fiery shower over and gone—there you saw such lads as these, who used almost to weep if they got not duly the dear-desired letter from sister or sweetheart, and when they did duly get it, opened it with trembling fingers, and even then let drop some natural tears—there we saw them leaping and dancing, with gross gesticulations and horrid oaths obscene, with grim outcasts from nature, whose mustached mouths were rank with sin and pollution—monsters for whom hell was yawning—their mortal mire already possessed with a demon. There, wretched, woebegone, and wearied out with recklessness and desperation, many wooed Chance and Fortune, who they hoped might yet listen to their prayers—and kept rattling the dice—cursing them that gave the indulgence—even in their cells of punishment for disobedience or mutiny. There you saw some, who in the crowded courts "sat apart retired,"—bringing the practised skill that once supported, or the native genius that once adorned life, to bear on beautiful contrivances and fancies elaborately executed with meanest instruments, till they rivalled or outdid the work of art assisted by all the ministries of science. And thus won they a poor pittance wherewithal

to purchase some little comfort or luxury, or ornament to their persons; for vanity had not forsaken some in their rusty squalor, and they sought to please her, their mistress or their bride. There you saw accomplished men conjuring before their eyes, on the paper or the canvass, to feed the longings of their souls, the lights and the shadows of the dear days that far away were beautifying some sacred spot of "*la belle France*"—perhaps some festal scene, for love in sorrow is still true to remembered joy, where once with youths and maidens

"They led the dance beside the murmuring Loire."

There you heard—and hushed then was all the hubbub—some clear silver voice, sweet almost as woman's, yet full of manhood in its depths, singing to the gay guitar, touched, though the musician was of the best and noblest blood of France, with a master's hand, "La belle Gabrielle!" And there might be seen, in the solitude of their own abstractions, men with minds that had sounded the profounds of science, and, seemingly undisturbed by all that clamour, pursuing the mysteries of lines and numbers—conversing with the harmonies and lofty stars of heaven, deaf to all the discord and despair of earth. Or religious still even more than they—for those were mental, these spiritual—you beheld there men, whose heads before their time were becoming grey, meditating on their own souls, and in holy hope and humble trust in their Redeemer, if not yet prepared, perpetually preparing themselves for the world to come!

To return to Birds in Cages;—they are, when well, uniformly as happy as the day is long. What else could oblige them, whether they will or no, to burst out into song—to hop about so pleased and pert—to play such fantastic tricks, like so many whirligigs—to sleep so soundly, and to awake into a small, shrill, compressed twitter of joy at the dawn of light? So utterly mistaken was Sterne, and all the other sentimentalists, that his Starling, who he absurdly opined was wishing to get out, would not have stirred a peg had the door of his cage been flung wide open, but would have pecked like a very game-cock at the hand inserted to give him his liberty. Depend upon it, that Starling had not the slightest idea of what he was saying; and had he been up to the meaning of his words, would have been shocked at his

ungrateful folly. Look at Canaries, and Chaffinches, and Bullfinches, and "the rest," how they amuse themselves for a while flitting about the room, and then, finding how dull a thing it is to be citizens of the world, bounce up to their cages, and shut the door from the inside, glad to be once more at home. Begin to whistle or sing yourself, and forthwith you have a duet or a trio. We can imagine no more perfectly tranquil and cheerful life than that of a Goldfinch in a cage in spring, with his wife and his children. All his social affections are cultivated to the utmost. He possesses many accomplishments unknown to his brethren among the trees;—he has never known what it is to want a meal in times of the greatest scarcity; and he admires the beautiful frostwork on the windows, when thousands of his feathered friends are buried in the snow, or, what is almost as bad, baked up into pies, and devoured by a large supper-party of both sexes, who fortify their flummery and flirtation by such viands, and, remorseless, swallow dozens upon dozens of the warblers of the woods.

Ay, ay, Mr Goldy! you are wondering what we are now doing, and speculating upon the scribbler with arch eyes and elevated crest, as if you would know the subject of his lucubrations. What the wiser or better wouldst thou be of human knowledge? Sometimes that little heart of thine goes pit-a-pat, when a great, ugly, staring contributor thrusts his inquisitive nose within the wires—or when a strange cat glides round and round the room, fascinating thee with the glare of his fierce fixed eyes;—but what is all that to the woes of an Editor?—Yes, sweet simpleton! do you not know that we are the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*—Christopher North! Yes, indeed, we are that very man—that self-same much-calumniated man-monster and Ogre. There, there!—perch on our shoulder, and let us laugh together at the whole world.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS AVIARY.

SECOND CANTICLE.

The Golden Eagle leads the van of our Birds of Prey—and there she sits in her usual carriage when in a state of rest. Her hunger and her thirst have been appeased—her wings are folded up in a dignified tranquillity—her talons, grasping a leafless branch, are almost hidden by the feathers of her breast—her sleepless eye has lost something of its ferocity—and the Royal Bird is almost serene in her solitary state in the cliff. The gorcock unalarmed crows among the moors and mosses—the blackbird whistles in the birken shaw—and the cony erects his ears at the mouth of his burrow, and whisks away frolicsome among the whins or heather.

There is no index to the hour—neither light nor shadow—no cloud. But from the composed aspect of the Bird, we may suppose it to be the hush of evening after a day of successful foray. The imps in the eyrie have been fed, and their hungry cry will not be heard till the dawn. The mother has there taken up her watchful rest, till in darkness she may glide up to her brood—the sire is somewhere sitting within her view among the rocks—a sentinel whose eye, and ear, and nostril are true, in exquisite fineness of sense, to their trust, and on whom rarely, and as if by a miracle, can steal the adventurous shepherd or huntsman, to wreak vengeance with his rifle on the spoiler of sheep-walk and forest-chase.

Yet sometimes it chanceth that the yellow lustre of her keen, wild, fierce eye is veiled, even in daylight, by the film of sleep. Perhaps sickness has been at the heart of the dejected bird, or fever wasted her wing. The sun may have smitten her, or the storm driven her against a rock. Then hunger and thirst—which in pride of plumage she scorned, and which only made her fiercer on the edge of her unfed

eyrie, as she whetted her beak on the flint-stone, and clutched the strong heather-stalks in her talons, as if she were anticipating prey—quell her courage, and in famine she eyes afar off the fowls she is unable to pursue, and with one stroke strike to earth. Her flight is heavier and heavier each succeeding day—she ventures not to cross the great glens with or without lochs—but flaps her way from rock to rock, lower and lower down along the same mountain-side—and finally, drawn by her weakness into dangerous descent, she is discovered at grey dawn far below the region of snow, assailed and insulted by the meanest carrion; till a bullet whizzing through her heart, down she topples, and soon is despatched by blows from the rifle-butt, the shepherd stretching out his foe's carcass on the sward, eight feet from wing-tip to wing-tip, with leg thick as his own wrist, and foot broad as his own hand.

But behold the Golden Eagle, as she has pounced, and is exulting over her prey! With her head drawn back between the crescent of her uplifted wings, which she will not fold till that prey be devoured, eye glaring cruel joy, neck-plumage bristling, tail-feathers fan-spread, and talons driven through the victim's entrails and heart—there she is new lighted on the ledge of a precipice, and fancy hears her yell and its echo. Beak and talons, all her life long, have had a stain of blood, for the murderess observes no Sabbath, and seldom dips them in loch or sea, except when dashing down suddenly among the terrified water-fowl from her watch-tower in the sky. The week-old fawn had left the doe's side but for a momentary race along the edge of the coppice; a rustle and a shadow—and the burden is borne off to the cliffs of Benevis. In an instant the small animal is dead—after a short exultation torn into pieces, and by eagles and eaglets devoured, its unswallowed or undigested bones mingle with those of many other creatures, encumbering the eyrie, and strewed around it over the bloody platform on which the young demons crawl forth to enjoy the sunshine.

Oh for the life of an eagle written by himself! It would outsell the Confessions even of the English Opium-Eater. Proudly would he, or she, write of birth and parentage. On the rock of ages he first opened his eyes to the sun, in noble instinct affronting and outstaring the light. The Great Glen

of Scotland—hath it not been the inheritance of his ancestors for many thousand years? No polluting mixture of ignoble blood, from intermarriages of necessity or convenience with kite, buzzard, hawk, or falcon. No, the Golden Eagles of Glen-Falloch, surnamed the Sun-starers, have formed alliances with the Golden Eagles of Cruachan, Benlawers, Shehallion, and Lochnagair—the Lightning-Glints, the Flood-fallers, the Storm-wheelers, the Cloud-cleavers, ever since the deluge. The education of the autobiographer had not been intrusted to a private tutor. Parental eyes, beaks, and talons, provided sustenance for his infant frame; and in that capacious eyrie, year after year repaired by dry branches from the desert, parental advice was yelled into him, meet for the expansion of his instinct, as wide and wonderful as the reason of earth-crawling man. What a noble naturalist did he, in a single session at the College of the Cliff, become! Of the customs, and habits, and haunts of all inferior creatures, he speedily made himself master—ours included. Nor was his knowledge confined to theory, but reduced to daily practice. He kept himself in constant training—taking a flight of a couple of hundred miles before breakfast—paying a forenoon visit to the farthest of the Hebride Isles, and returning to dinner in Glenco. In one day he has flown to Norway on a visit to his uncle by the mother's side, and returned the next to comfort his paternal uncle, lying sick at the Head of the Cambrian Dee. He soon learned to despise himself for having once yelled for food, when food was none; and to sit or sail, on rock or through ether, athirst and an hungered, but mute. The virtues of patience, endurance, and fortitude, have become with him, in strict accordance with the Aristotelian Moral Philosophy—habits. A Peripatetic Philosopher he could hardly be called—properly speaking, he belongs to the Solar School—an airy sect, who take very high ground, indulge in lofty flights, and are often lost in the clouds. Now and then a light chapter might be introduced, setting forth how he and other youngsters of the Blood Royal were wont to take an occasional game at High-Jinks, or tourney in air lists, the champions on opposite sides flying from the Perthshire and from the Argyllshire mountains, and encountering with a clash in the azure common, six thousand feet high. But the fever of love burned in his blood, and flying to the mountains

of another continent, in obedience to the yell of an old oral tradition, he wooed and won his virgin bride—a monstrous beauty, wider-winged than himself, to kill or caress, and bearing the proof of her noble nativity in the radiant Iris that belongs in perfection of fierceness but to the Sun-starers, and in them is found, unimpaired by cloudiest clime, over the uttermost parts of the earth. The bridegroom and his bride, during the honey-moon, slept on the naked rock—till they had built their eyrie beneath its cliff-canopy on the mountain-brow. When the bride was "as Eagles wish to be who love their lords"—devoted unto her was the bridegroom, even as the cushat murmuring to his brooding mate in the central pine-grove of a forest. Tenderly did he drop from his talons, close beside her beak, the delicate spring lamb, or the too early leveret, owing to the hurried and imprudent marriage of its parents before March, buried in a living tomb on April's closing day. Through all thy glens, Albyn! hadst thou reason to mourn, at the bursting of the shells that Queen-bird had been cherishing beneath her bosom. Aloft in heaven wheeled the Royal Pair, from rising to setting sun. Among the bright-blooming heather they espied the tartan'd shepherd, or hunter creeping like a lizard, and from behind the vain shadow of a rock watching with his rifle the flight he would fain see shorn of its beams. The flocks were thinned—and the bleating of desolate dams among the woolly people heard from many a brae. Poison was strewn over the glens for their destruction, but the Eagle, like the lion, preys not on carcasses; and the shepherd dogs howled in agony over the carrion in which they devoured death. Ha! was not that a day of triumph to the Sun-starers of Cruachan, when sky-hunting in couples, far down on the greensward before the ruined gateway of Kilchurn Castle, they saw, left all to himself in the sunshine, the infant heir of the Campbell of Breadalbane, the child of the Lord of Glenorchy and all its streams! Four talons in an instant were in his heart. Too late were the outcries from all the turrets; for ere the castle-gates were flung open, the golden head of the royal babe was lying in gore, in the Eyrie on the iron ramparts of Ben-Slarive—his blue eyes dug out—his rosy cheeks torn—and his brains dropping from beaks that revelled yelling within the skull!—Such are a few hints for "Some Passages in the Life of the Golden Eagle, written by Him-

self,"—in one volume crown octavo—Blackwoods, Edinburgh and London.

O heavens and earth!—forests and barn-yards! what a difference with a distinction between a GOLDEN EAGLE and a GREEN GOOSE! There, all neck and bottom, splay-footed, and hissing in miserable imitation of a serpent, lolling from side to side, up and down like an ill-trimmed punt, the downy gosling waddles through the green mire, and, imagining that King George the Fourth is meditating mischief against him, cackles angrily as he plunges into the pond. No swan that "on still St Mary's lake floats double, swan and shadow," so proud as he! He prides himself on being a gander, and never forgets the lesson instilled into him by his parents, soon as he chipt the shell in the nest among the nettles, that his ancestors saved the Roman Capitol. In process of time, in company with swine, he grazes on the common, and insults the Egyptians in their roving camp. Then comes the season of plucking—and this very pen bears testimony to his tortures. Out into the houseless winter is he driven—and, if he escapes being frozen into a lump of fat ice, he is crammed till his liver swells into a four-pounder—his cerebellum is cut by the cruel knife of a phrenological cook, and his remains buried with a cerement of apple sauce in the paunches of apoplectic aldermen, eating against each other at a civic feast! Such are a few hints for "Some Passages in the Life of a Green Goose," written by himself—in foolscap octavo—published by Quack and Co., Ludgate Lane, and sold by all booksellers in town and country.

Poor poets must not meddle with eagles. In the "Fall of Nineveh," Mr Atherstone describes a grand review of his army by Sardanapalus. Two million men are put into motion by the moving of the Assyrian flag-staff in the hand of the king, who takes his station on a mount conspicuous to all the army. This flag-staff, though "tall as a mast"—Mr Atherstone does not venture to go on to say with Milton, "hewn on Norwegian hills," or "of some tall ammiral," though the readers' minds supply the deficiency—this mast was, we are told, for "*two strong men* a task;" but it must have been so for twenty. To have had the least chance of being all at once seen by two million of men, it could not have been less than fifty feet high—and if Sardanapalus waved the royal standard

of Assyria round his head, Samson or ODoherty must have been a joke to him. However, we shall suppose he did; and what was the result? Such shouts arose that the solid walls of Nineveh were shook, "and the firm ground made tremble." But this was not all.

> "At his height,
> A speck scarce visible, the eagle heard,
> And felt his strong wing falter: terror-struck,
> Fluttering and wildly screaming, down he sank—
> Down through the quivering air: another shout,—
> His talons droop—his sunny eye grows dark—
> His strengthless pennons fail—plump down he falls,
> Even like a stone. Amid the far-off hills,
> With eye of fire, and shaggy mane uprear'd,
> The sleeping lion in his den sprang up;
> Listen'd awhile—then laid his monstrous mouth
> Close to the floor, and breathed hot roarings out
> In fierce reply."

What think ye of that, John Audubon, Charles Buonaparte, J. Prideaux Selby, James Wilson, Sir William Jardine, and ye other European and American ornithologists? Pray, Mr Atherstone, did you ever see an eagle—a speck in the sky? Never again suffer yourself, oh, dear sir! to believe old women's tales of men on earth shooting eagles with their mouths; because the thing is impossible, even had their mouthpieces had percussion-locks—had they been crammed with ammunition to the muzzle. Had a stray sparrow been fluttering in the air, he would certainly have got a fright, and probably a fall—nor would there have been any hope for a tom-tit. But an eagle—an eagle ever so many thousand feet aloft—poo, poo!—he would merely have muted on the roaring multitude, and given Sardanapalus an additional epaulette. Why, had a string of wild-geese at the time been warping their way on the wind, they would merely have shot the wedge firmer and sharper into the air, and answered the earth-born shout with an air-born gabble—clangour to clangour. Where were Mr Atherstone's powers of ratiocination, and all his acoustics? Two shouts slew an eagle. What became of all the other denizens of air—especially crows, ravens, and vultures, who, seeing two millions of men, must have come flocking against a day of battle? Every mother's son of them

must have gone to pot. Then what scrambling among the allied troops! And what was one eagle doing by himself "up-by yonder?" Was he the only eagle in Assyria—the secular bird of ages? Who was looking at him, first a speck —then faltering—then fluttering and wildly screaming—then plump down like a stone? Mr Atherstone talks as if he saw it. In the circumstances he had no business with his "sunny eye growing dark." That is entering too much into the medical, or rather anatomical symptoms of his apoplexy, and would be better for a medical journal than an epic poem. But to be done with it—two shouts that slew an eagle a mile up the sky, must have cracked all the tympana of the two million shouters. The entire army must have become as deaf as a post. Nay, Sardanapalus himself, on the mount, must have been blown into the air as by the explosion of a range of gunpowder-mills; the campaign taken a new turn; and a revolution been brought about, of which, at this distance of place and time, it is not easy for us to conjecture what might have been the fundamental features on which it would have hinged—and thus an entirely new aspect given to all the histories of the world.

What is said about the lion, is to our minds equally picturesque and absurd. He was among the "far-off hills." How far, pray? Twenty miles? If so, then without a silver ear-trumpet he could not have heard the huzzas. If the far-off hills were so near Nineveh as to allow the lion to hear the huzzas even in his sleep, the epithet "far-off" should be altered, and the lion himself brought from the interior. But we cannot believe that lions were permitted to live in dens within ear-shot of Nineveh. Nimrod had taught them "never to come there no more"—and Semiramis looked sharp after the suburbs. But, not to insist unduly upon a mere matter of police, is it the nature of lions, lying in their dens among far-off hills, to start up from their sleep, and "breathe hot roarings out" in fierce reply to the shouts of armies? All stuff! Mr Atherstone shows off his knowledge of natural history, in telling us that the said lion, in roaring, "laid his monstrous mouth close to the floor." We believe he does so; but did Mr Atherstone learn the fact from Cuvier or from Wombwell? It is always dangerous to a poet to be too picturesque; and in this case, you are made, whether you will

or no, to see an old, red, lean, mangy monster, called a lion, in his unhappy den in a menagerie, bathing his beard in the sawdust, and from his toothless jaws "breathing hot roarings out," to the terror of servant-girls and children, in fierce reply to a man in a hairy cap and full suit of velveteen, stirring him up with a long pole, and denominating him by the sacred name of the great asserter of Scottish independence.

Sir Humphry Davy—in his own science the first man of his age—does not shine in his "Salmonia"—pleasant volume though it be—as an ornithologist. Let us see.

"Poiet.—The scenery improves as we advance nearer the lower parts of the lake. The mountains become higher, and that small island or peninsula presents a bold craggy outline; and the birch-wood below it, and the pines above, make a scene somewhat Alpine in character. But what is that large bird soaring above the pointed rock, towards the end of the lake? Surely it is an eagle!

"Hal.—You are right; it is an eagle, and of a rare and peculiar species—the grey or silver eagle, a noble bird! From the size of the animal, it must be the female; and her eyrie is in that high rock. I dare say the male is not far off."

Sir Humphry speaks in his introductory pages of Mr Wordsworth as a lover of fishing and fishermen; and we cannot help thinking and feeling that he intends Poietes as an image of that great Poet. What! William Wordsworth, the very high-priest of nature, represented to have seen an eagle for the first time of his life only then, and to have boldly ventured on a conjecture that such was the name and nature of the bird! "But what is that large bird soaring above the pointed rock, towards the end of the lake? Surely it is an eagle!" "Yes, you are right—it is an eagle." Ha—ha—ha—ha—ha—ha! Sir Humphry—Sir Humphry—that guffaw was not ours—it came from the Bard of Rydal—albeit unused to the laughing mood—in the haunted twilight of that beautiful—that solemn Terrace.

Poietes having been confirmed, by the authority of Halieus, in his belief that the bird is an eagle, exclaims, agreeably to the part he plays, "Look at the bird! She dashes into the water, *falling like a rock* and raising a column of spray—she has *fallen from a great height*. And now she rises again into the air—*what an extraordinary sight!*" Nothing is so annoy-

ing as to be ordered to look at a sight which, unless you shut your eyes, it is impossible for you not to see. A person behaving in a boat like Poietes, deserved being flung overboard. "Look at the bird!" Why, every eye was already upon her; and if Poietes had had a single spark of poetry in his composition, he would have been struck mute by such a sight, instead of bawling out, open-mouthed and goggle-eyed, like a Cockney to a rocket at Vauxhall. Besides, an eagle does not, when descending on her prey, fall like a rock. There is nothing like the "*vis inertiæ*" in her precipitation. You still see the self-willed energy of the ravenous bird, as the mass of plumes flashes in the spray—of which, by the by, there never was, nor will be, a column so raised. She is as much the queen of birds as she sinks as when she soars—her trust and her power are still seen and felt to be in her pinions, whether she shoots to or from the zenith—to a falling star she might be likened—just as any other devil—either by Milton or Wordsworth—for such a star seems to our eye and our imagination ever instinct with spirit, not to be impelled by exterior force, but to be self-shot from heaven.

Upon our word, we begin to believe that we ourselves deserve the name of Poietes much better than the gentleman who at threescore had never seen an eagle. "She has fallen from a great height," quoth the gentleman—"What an extraordinary sight!" he continueth—while we are mute as the oar suspended by the up-gazing Celt, whose quiet eye brightens as it pursues the Bird to her eyrie in the cliff over the cove where the red-deer feed.

Poietes having given vent to his emotions in such sublime exclamations—"Look at the bird!" "What an extraordinary sight!" might have thenceforth held his tongue, and said no more about eagles. But Halieus cries, "There! you see her rise with a fish in her talons"—and Poietes, very simply, or rather like a simpleton, returns for answer, "She *gives an interest which I hardly expected to have found in this scene.* Pray, are there *many of these animals* in this country?" A poet hardly expecting to find interest in such a scene as a great Highland loch—Loch Maree! "Pray, are there many *of these hanimals in this country?*" Loud cries of Oh! oh! oh! No doubt an eagle is an animal; like Mr Cobbett or Mr O'Connell—"a very fine animal;" but we particularly, and

earnestly, and anxiously, request Sir Humphry Davy not to call her so again—but to use the term bird, or any other term he chooses, except animal. Animal, a living creature, is too general, too vague by far; and somehow or other it offends our ear shockingly when applied to an eagle. We may be wrong, but in a trifling matter of this kind Sir Humphry surely will not refuse our supplication. Let him call a horse an animal, if he chooses—or an ass—or a cow—but not an eagle—as he loves us, not an eagle; let him call it a bird—the Bird of Jove—the Queen or King of the Sky—or anything else he chooses—but not an animal—no—no—no—not an animal, as he hopes to prosper, to be praised in Maga, embalmed and immortalised.

Neither ought Poietes to have asked if there were "*many* of these animals" in this country. He ought to have known that there are not *many* of these animals in any country. Eagles are proud—apt to hold their heads very high—and to make themselves scarce. A great many eagles all flying about together would look most absurd. They are aware of that, and fly in "ones and twos"—a couple perhaps to a county. Poietes might as well have asked Mungo Park if there were a great many lions in Africa. Mungo, we think, saw but one; and that was one too much. There were probably a few more between Sego and Timbuctoo—but there are not a "great many of those animals in that country"—though quite sufficient for the purpose. How the Romans contrived to get at hundreds for a single show, perplexes our power of conjecture.

Halieus says—with a smile on his lip surely—in answer to the query of Poietes—"Of this species I have seen but these two; and, I believe, the young ones migrate as soon as they can provide for themselves; for this solitary bird requires a large space to move and feed in, and does not allow its offspring to partake its reign, or to live near it." This is all pretty true, and known to every child rising or risen six, except poor Poietes. He had imagined that there were "many of these animals in this country," that they all went a-fishing together as amicably as five hundred sail of Manksmen among a shoal of herrings.

Throughout these Dialogues we have observed that Ornither rarely opens his mouth. Why so taciturn? On the subject

of birds he ought, from his name, to be well informed; and how could he let slip an opportunity, such as will probably never be afforded him again in this life, of being eloquent on the Silver Eagle? Ornithology is surely the department of Ornither. Yet there is evidently something odd and peculiar in his idiosyncrasy; for we observe that he never once alludes to "these animals," birds, during the whole excursion. He has not taken his gun with him into the Highlands, a sad oversight indeed in a gentleman who "is to be regarded as generally fond of the sports of the field." Flappers are plentiful over all the moors about the middle of July; and hoodies, owls, hawks, ravens, make all first-rate shooting to sportsmen not over anxious about the pot. It is to be presumed, too, that he can stuff birds. What noble specimens might he not have shot for Mr Selby! On one occasion, "the SILVER EAGLE" is preying in a pool within slug range, and there is some talk of shooting him—we suppose with an oar, or the butt of a fishing-rod, for the party have no firearms—but Poietes insists on sparing his life, because "these animals" are a picturesque accompaniment to the scenery, and "give it an interest which he had not expected to find" in mere rivers, lochs, moors, and mountains. Genus Falco must all the while have been laughing in his sleeve at the whole party—particularly at Ornither—who, to judge from his general demeanour, may be a fair shot with number five at an old newspaper expanded on a barn-door twenty yards off, but never could have had the audacity to think in his most ambitious mood of letting off his gun at an Eagle.

But further, Halieus, before he took upon him to speak so authoritatively about eagles, should have made himself master of their names and natures. He is manifestly no scientific ornithologist. We are. The general question concerning Eagles in Scotland may now be squeezed into very small compass. Exclusive of the true Osprey (Falco Haliætus), which is rather a larger fishing-hawk than an eagle, there are two kinds, viz.—the GOLDEN EAGLE (F. Chrysaëtos), and the WHITE-TAILED or CINEROUS EAGLE (F. Albicilla). The other two *nominal* species are disposed of in the following manner:—First, the RING-TAILED EAGLE (F. Fulvus) is the young of the Golden Eagle, being distinguished in early life by having the basal and central portion of the tail white, which colour

disappears as the bird attains the adult state. Second, the Sea Eagle (F. Ossifragus), commonly so called, is the young of the White-tailed Eagle above named, from which it differs in having a brown tail; for in this species the white of the tail becomes every year more apparent as the bird increases in age, whereas, in the Golden Eagle, the white altogether disappears in the adult.

It is to the Ring-Tailed Eagle, and, by consequence, to the Golden Eagle, that the name of Black Eagle is applied in the Highlands.

The White-tailed or Sea Eagle, as it becomes old, attains, in addition to the pure tail, a pale or bleached appearance, from which it may merit and obtain the name of Grey or Silver Eagle, as Sir Humphry Davy chooses to call it; but it is not known among naturalists by that name. There is no other species, however, to which the name can apply; and, therefore, Sir Humphry has committed the very gross mistake of calling the Grey or Silver Eagle (to use his own nomenclature) a very rare Eagle, since it is the most common of all the Scots, and also—*a fortiori*—of all the English Eagles—being in fact the Sea Eagle of the Highlands.

It preys often on fish dead or alive; but not exclusively, as it also attacks young lambs, and drives off the ravens from carrion prey, being less fastidious in its diet than the Golden Eagle, which probably kills its own meat—and has been known to carry off children; for a striking account of one of which hay-field robberies you have but a few minutes to wait.

As to its driving off its young, its habits are probably similar in this respect to other birds of prey, none of which appear to keep together in families after the young can shift for themselves; but we have never met with any one who has seen them in the act of driving. It is stated vaguely, in all books, of all eagles.

As to its requiring a large range to feed in—we have only to remark that, from the powerful flight of these birds, and the wild and barren nature of the countries which they inhabit, there can be no doubt that they fly far, and "prey in distant isles"—as Thomson has it; but Halieus needed not have stated this circumstance as a character of this peculiar eagle—for an eagle with a small range does not exist; and therefore it is to be presumed that they require a large one.

Further, all this being the case, there seems to be no necessity for the old eagles giving themselves the trouble to drive off the young ones, who by natural instinct will fly off of their own accord, as soon as their wings can bear them over the sea. If an eagle were so partial to his native vale, as never on any account, hungry or thirsty, drunk or sober, to venture into the next parish, why then the old people would be forced, on the old principle of self-preservation, to pack off their progeny to bed and board beyond Benevis. But an Eagle is a Citizen of the World. He is friendly to the views of Mr Huskisson on the Wool Trade, the Fisheries, and the Colonies—and acts upon the old adage,

"Every bird for himself, and God for us all!"

To conclude, for the present, this branch of our subject, we beg leave humbly to express our belief, that Sir Humphry Davy never saw the Eagle, by him called the Grey or Silver, hunting for fish in the style described in "Salmonia." It does not dislike fish—but it is not its nature to keep hunting for them so, not in the Highlands at least, whatever it may do on American continent or isles. Sir Humphry talks of the bird dashing down repeatedly upon a pool within shot of the anglers. We have angled fifty times in the Highlands for Sir Humphry's once, but never saw nor heard of such a sight. He has read of such things, and introduced them into this dialogue for the sake of effect—all quite right to do—had his reading lain among trustworthy Ornithologists. The common Eagle—which he ignorantly, as we have seen, calls so rare—is a shy bird, as all shepherds know—and is seldom within range of the rifle. Gorged with blood, they are sometimes run in upon and felled with a staff or club. So perished, in the flower of his age, that Eagle whose feet now form handles to the bell-ropes of our Sanctum at Buchanan Lodge—and are the subject of a clever copy of verses by Mullion, entitled "All the Talons."

We said in "The Moors," that we envied not the eagle or any other bird his wings, and showed cause why we preferred our own feet. Had Puck wings? If he had, we retract, and would sport Puck.

Oberon.

"Fetch me this herb—and be thou here again,
Ere the Leviathan can swim a league."

Puck.

" I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes."

How infinitely more poetical are wings like these than seven-league boots! We declare, on our conscience, that we would not accept the present of a pair of seven-league boots to-morrow—or, if we did, it would be out of mere politeness to the genie who might press them on us, and the wisest thing we could do would be to lock them up in a drawer out of the reach of the servants. Suppose that we wished to walk from Clovenford to Innerleithen—why, with seven-league boots on, one single step would take us up to Posso, seven miles above Peebles! That would never do. By mincing one's steps, indeed, one might contrive to stop at Innerleithen; but suppose a gad-fly were to sting one's hip at the Pirn—one unintentional stride would deposit Christopher at Drummelzier, and another over the Cruik, and far away down Annan water! Therefore, there is nothing like wings. On wings you can flutter—and glide—and float and soar—now like a humming-bird among the flowers—now like a swan, half rowing, half sailing, and half flying adown a river—now like an eagle afloat in the blue ocean of heaven, or shooting sunwards, invisible in excess of light—and bidding farewell to earth and its humble shadows. " O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!" Who hath not, in some heavy hour or other, from the depth of his very soul, devoutly—passionately—hopelessly—breathed that wish to escape beyond the limits of woe and sin—not into the world of dreamless death; for weary though the immortal pilgrim may have been, never desired he the doom of annihilation, untroubled although it be, shorn of all the attributes of being—but he has prayed for the wings of the dove, because that fair creature, as she wheeled herself away from the sight of human dwellings, has seemed to disappear to his imagination among old glimmering forests, wherein she foldeth her wing and falleth gladly asleep—and therefore, in those agitated times when the spirits of men acknowledge kindred with the inferior creatures, and would fain interchange with them powers and qualities, they are willing even to lay down their intelligence, their reason, their conscience itself,

so that they could but be blessed with the faculty of escaping from all the agonies that intelligence, and reason, and conscience alone can know, and beyond the reach of this world's horizon to flee away and be at rest!

Puck says he will put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. At what rate is that per second, taking the circumference of the earth at 27,000 miles, more or less? There is a question for the mechanics, somewhat about as difficult of solution as Lord Brougham's celebrated one of the Smuggler and the Revenue Cutter—for the solution of which he recommended the aid of algebra. It is not so quick as you would imagine. We forget the usual rate of a cannon-ball in good condition, when he is in training—and before he is at all blown. So do we forget, we are sorry to confess, the number of centuries that it would take a good, stout, well-made, able-bodied cannon-ball, to accomplish a journey to our planet from one of the fixed stars. The great difficulty, we confess, would be to get him safely conveyed thither. If that could be done, we should have no fear of his finding his way back, if not in our time, in that of our posterity. However red-hot he might have been on starting, he would be cool enough, no doubt, on his arrival at the goal; yet we should have no objection to back him against Time for a trifle—Time, we observe, in almost all matches being beat, often indeed by the most miserable hacks, that can with difficulty raise a gallop. Time, however, possibly runs booty; for when he does make play, it must be confessed that he is a spanker, and that nothing has been seen with such a stride since Eclipse.

O beautiful and beloved Highland Parish! in whose dashing glens our beating heart first felt the awe of solitude, and learned to commune (alas! to what purpose?) with the tumult of its own thoughts! The circuit of thy skies was indeed a glorious arena spread over the mountain-tops for the combats of the great birds of prey! One wild cry or another was in the lift—of the hawk, or the glead, or the raven, or the eagle—or when those fiends slept, of the peaceful heron, and sea-bird by wandering boys pursued in its easy flight, till the snow-white child of ocean wavered away far inland, as if in search of a steadfast happiness unknown on the restless waves. Seldom did the eagle stoop to the challenge of the

inferior fowl; but when he did, it was like a mailed knight treading down unknown men in battle. The hawks, and the gleads, and the ravens, and the carrion-crows, and the hooded-crows, and the rooks, and the magpies, and all the rest of the rural militia, forgetting their own feuds, sometimes came sallying from all quarters, with even a few facetious jackdaws from the old castle, to show fight with the monarch of the air. Amidst all that multitude of wings winnowing the wind, was heard the sough and whizz of those mighty vans, as the Royal Bird, himself an army, performed his majestic evolutions with all the calm confidence of a master in the art of aerial war, now shooting up half-a-thousand feet perpendicular, and now suddenly plump-down into the rear of the croaking, cawing, and chattering battalions, cutting off their retreat to the earth. Then the rout became general, the missing, however, far outnumbering the dead. Keeping possession of the field of battle, hung the eagle for a short while motionless—till with one fierce yell of triumph he seemed to seek the sun, and disappear like a speck in the light, surveying half of Scotland at a glance, and a thousand of her isles.

Some people have a trick of describing incidents as having happened within their own observation, when in fact they were at the time lying asleep in bed, and disturbing the whole house with the snore of their dormitory. Such is too often the character of the eyewitnesses of the present age. Now, we would not claim personal acquaintance with an incident we had not seen—no, not for a hundred guineas per sheet; and, therefore, we warn the reader not to believe the following little story about an eagle and child (by the way, that is the Derby crest, and a favourite sign of inns in the north of England) on our authority. "I tell the tale as 'twas told to me," by the schoolmaster of Naemanslaws, in the shire of Ayr; and if the incident never occurred, then must he have been one of the greatest liars that ever taught the young idea how to shoot. For our single selves, we are by nature credulous. Many extraordinary things happen in this life, and though "seeing is believing," so likewise "believing is seeing," as every one must allow who reads these our Recreations.

Almost all the people in the parish were leading in their meadow-hay (there were not in all its ten miles square twenty

acres of ryegrass) on the same day of midsummer, so drying was the sunshine and the wind,—and huge heaped-up wains, that almost hid from view the horses that drew them along the sward, beginning to get green with second growth, were moving in all directions towards the snug farmyards. Never had the parish seemed before so populous. Jocund was the balmy air with laughter, whistle, and song. But the Tree-gnomons threw the shadow of "one o'clock" on the green dial-face of the earth—the horses were unyoked, and took instantly to grazing—groups of men, women, lads, lasses, and children collected under grove, and bush, and hedgerow—graces were pronounced, some of them rather too tedious in presence of the mantling milk-cans, bullion-bars of butter, and crackling cakes; and the great Being who gave them that day their daily bread, looked down from his Eternal Throne, well pleased with the piety of his thankful creatures.

The great Golden Eagle, the pride and the pest of the parish, stooped down, and away with something in his talons. One single sudden female shriek—and then shouts and out-cries as if a church spire had tumbled down on a congregation at a sacrament. "Hannah Lamond's bairn! Hannah Lamond's bairn!" was the loud fast-spreading cry. "The Eagle's taen aff Hannah Lamond's bairn!" and many hundred feet were in another instant hurrying towards the mountain. Two miles of hill and dale, and copse and shingle, and many intersecting brooks, lay between; but in an incredibly short time the foot of the mountain was alive with people. The eyrie was well known, and both old birds were visible on the rock-ledge. But who shall scale that dizzy cliff, which Mark Steuart the sailor, who had been at the storming of many a fort, once attempted in vain? All kept gazing, or weeping, or wringing of hands, rooted to the ground, or running back and forwards, like so many ants, essaying their new wings, in discomfiture. "What's the use—what's the use o' ony puir human means? We have nae power but in prayer!" And many knelt down—fathers and mothers thinking of their own babies—as if they would force the deaf heavens to hear.

Hannah Lamond had been all this while sitting on a stone, with a face perfectly white, and eyes like those of a mad person, fixed on the eyrie. Nobody noticed her; for strong as all sympathies with her had been at the swoop of

the Eagle, they were now swallowed up in the agony of eyesight. "Only last Sabbath was my sweet wee wean baptised in the name o' the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" and on uttering these words, she flew off through the brakes and over the huge stones, up—up—up—faster than ever huntsman ran in to the death—fearless as a goat playing among the precipices. No one doubted, no one could doubt, that she would soon be dashed to pieces. But have not people who walk in their sleep, obedient to the mysterious guidance of dreams, clomb the walls of old ruins, and found footing, even in decrepitude, along the edge of unguarded battlements, and down dilapidated stair-cases deep as draw-wells or coal-pits, and returned with open, fixed, and unseeing eyes, unharmed, to their beds at midnight? It is all the work of the soul, to whom the body is a slave; and shall not the agony of a mother's passion—who sees her baby, whose warm mouth had just left her breast, hurried off by a demon to a hideous death—bear her limbs aloft wherever there is dust to dust, till she reach that devouring den, and fiercer and more furious than any bird of prey that ever bathed its beak in blood, throttle the fiends that with their heavy wing would fain flap her down the cliffs, and hold up her child in deliverance?

No stop — no stay — she knew not that she drew her breath. Beneath her feet Providence fastened every loose stone, and to her hands strengthened every root. How was she ever to descend? That fear, then, but once crossed her heart, as up—up—up—to the little image made of her own flesh and blood. "The God who holds me now from perishing—will not the same God save me when my child is at my breast?" Down came the fierce rushing of the Eagle's wings—each savage bird dashing close to her head, so that she saw the yellow of their wrathful eyes. All at once they quailed, and were cowed. Yelling, they flew off to the stump of an ash jutting out of a cliff, a thousand feet above the cataract; and the Christian mother, falling across the eyrie, in the midst of bones and blood, clasped her child—dead—dead—no doubt—but unmangled and untorn, and swaddled up just as it was when she laid it down asleep among the fresh hay in a nook of the harvest-field. Oh! what pang of perfect blessedness transfixed her heart from that faint, feeble

cry—"It lives! it lives! it lives!" and baring her bosom, with loud laughter, and eyes dry as stones, she felt the lips of the unconscious innocent once more murmuring at the fount of life and love. "O, thou great and thou dreadful God! whither hast thou brought me—one of the most sinful of thy creatures? Oh! save me lest I perish, even for thy own name's sake! O Thou, who died to save sinners, have mercy upon me!" Cliffs, chasms, blocks of stone, and the skeletons of old trees—far—far down—and dwindled into specks a thousand creatures of her own kind, stationary, or running to and fro! Was that the sound of the waterfall, or the faint roar of voices? Is that her native strath?—and that tuft of trees, does it contain the hut in which stands the cradle of her child? Never more shall it be rocked by her foot! Here must she die—and when her breast is exhausted —her baby too. And those horrid beaks, and eyes, and talons, and wings will return, and her child will be devoured at last, even within the dead arms that can protect it no more.

Where, all this while, was Mark Steuart, the sailor? Halfway up the cliffs. But his eyes had got dim, and his head dizzy, and his heart sick—and he who had so often reefed the topgallant-sail, when at midnight the coming of the gale was heard afar, covered his face with his hands, and dared look no longer on the swimming heights. "And who will take care of my poor bedridden mother?" thought Hannah, who, through exhaustion of so many passions, could no more retain in her grasp the hope she had clutched in despair. A voice whispered, "God." She looked round expecting to see a spirit; but nothing moved except a rotten branch, that, under its own weight, broke off from the crumbling rock. Her eye —by some secret sympathy with the inanimate object— watched its fall; and it seemed to stop, not far off, on a small platform. Her child was bound upon her shoulders—she knew not how or when—but it was safe—and scarcely daring to open her eyes, she slid down the shelving rocks, and found herself on a small piece of firm root-bound soil, with the tops of bushes appearing below. With fingers suddenly strengthened into the power of iron, she swung herself down by brier, and broom, and heather, and dwarf-birch. There, a loosened stone leapt over a ledge and no sound was heard, so profound was

its fall. There, the shingle rattled down the screes, and she hesitated not to follow. Her feet bounded against the huge stone that stopped them; but she felt no pain. Her body was callous as the cliff. Steep as the wall of a house was now the side of the precipice. But it was matted with ivy centuries old—long ago dead, and without a single green leaf—but with thousands of arm-thick stems petrified into the rock, and covering it as with a trellice. She felt her baby on her neck —and with hands and feet clung to that fearful ladder. Turning round her head, and looking down, she saw the whole population of the parish—so great was the multitude—on their knees. She heard the voice of psalms—a hymn breathing the spirit of one united prayer. Sad and solemn was the strain—but nothing dirge-like—sounding not of death, but deliverance. Often had she sung that tune—perhaps the very words—but them she heard not—in her own hut, she and her mother—or in the kirk, along with all the congregation. An unseen hand seemed fastening her fingers to the ribs of ivy, and in sudden inspiration, believing that her life was to be saved, she became almost as fearless as if she had been changed into a winged creature. Again her feet touched stones and earth—the psalm was hushed—but a tremulous sobbing voice was close beside her, and a she-goat, with two little kids at her feet. "Wild heights," thought she, "do these creatures climb—but the dam will lead down her kids by the easiest paths; for in the brute creatures holy is the power of a mother's love!" and turning round her head, she kissed her sleeping baby, and for the first time she wept.

Overhead frowned the front of the precipice, never touched before by human hand or foot. No one had ever dreamt of scaling it, and the Golden Eagles knew that well in their instinct, as, before they built their eyrie, they had brushed it with their wings. But the downwards part of the mountain-side, though scarred, and seamed, and chasmed, was yet accessible—and more than one person in the parish had reached the bottom of the Glead's Cliff. Many were now attempting it—and ere the cautious mother had followed her dumb guides a hundred yards, through among dangers that, although enough to terrify the stoutest heart, were traversed by her without a shudder, the head of one man appeared, and

then the head of another, and she knew that God had delivered her and her child into the care of their fellow-creatures. Not a word was spoken—she hushed her friends with her hands—and with uplifted eyes pointed to the guides sent to her by Heaven. Small green plats, where those creatures nibble the wildflowers, became now more frequent—trodden lines, almost as plain as sheep-paths, showed that the dam had not led her young into danger; and now the brushwood dwindled away into straggling shrubs, and the party stood on a little eminence above the stream, and forming part of the strath.

There had been trouble and agitation, much sobbing and many tears, among the multitude, while the mother was scaling the cliffs—sublime was the shout that echoed afar the moment she reached the eyrie—then had succeeded a silence deep as death — in a little while arose that hymning prayer, succeeded by mute supplication—the wildness of thankful and congratulatory joy had next its sway — and now that her salvation was sure, the great crowd rustled like a wind-swept wood. And for whose sake was all this alternation of agony? A poor humble creature, unknown to many even by name—one who had had but few friends, nor wished for more—contented to work all day, here—there—anywhere—that she might be able to support her aged mother and her child—and who on Sabbath took her seat in an obscure pew, set apart for paupers, in the kirk.

"Fall back, and give her fresh air," said the old minister of the parish; and the ring of close faces widened round her lying as in death. "Gie me the bonny bit bairn into my arms," cried first one mother and then another, and it was tenderly handed round the circle of kisses, many of the snooded maidens bathing its face in tears. "There's no a single scratch about the puir innocent, for the Eagle, you see, maun hae stuck its talons into the lang claes and the shawl. Blin', blin' maun they be who see not the finger o' God in this thing!"

Hannah started up from her swoon—and, looking wildly round, cried, "Oh! the Bird—the Bird!—the Eagle—the Eagle!—the Eagle has carried off my bonny wee Walter—is there nane to pursue?" A neighbour put her baby into her breast; and shutting her eyes, and smiting her forehead, the sorely bewildered creature said in a low voice, "Am I wauken

—oh! tell me if I'm wauken—or if a' this be but the wark o' a fever."

Hannah Lamond was not yet twenty years old, and although she was a mother—and you may guess what a mother—yet —frown not, fair and gentle reader—frown not, pure and stainless as thou art—to her belonged not the sacred name of wife—and that baby was the child of sin and of shame—yes —"the child of misery, baptised in tears!" She had loved —trusted—been betrayed—and deserted. In sorrow and solitude—uncomforted and despised—she bore her burden. Dismal had been the hour of travail—and she feared her mother's heart would have broken, even when her own was cleft in twain. But how healing is forgiveness—alike to the wounds of the forgiving and the forgiven! And then Hannah knew that, although guilty before God, her guilt was not such as her fellow-creatures deemed it—for there were dreadful secrets which should never pass her lips against the father of her child. So she bowed down her young head, and soiled it with the ashes of repentance—walking with her eyes on the ground as she again entered the kirk—yet not fearing to lift them up to heaven during the prayer. Her sadness inspired a general pity—she was excluded from no house she had heart to visit—no coarse comment, no ribald jest accompanied the notice people took of her baby—no licentious rustic presumed on her frailty; for the pale, melancholy face of the nursing mother, weeping as she sung the lullaby, forbade all such approach—and an universal sentiment of indignation drove from the parish the heartless and unprincipled seducer —if all had been known, too weak word for his crime—who left thus to pine in sorrow, and in shame far worse than sorrow, one who till her unhappy fall had been held up by every mother as an example to her daughters.

Never had she striven to cease to love her betrayer—but she had striven—and an appeased conscience had enabled her to do so—to think not of him now that he had deserted her for ever. Sometimes his image, as well in love as in wrath, passed before the eye of her heart—but she closed it in tears of blood, and the phantom disappeared. Thus all the love towards him that slept—but was not dead—arose in yearnings of still more exceeding love towards his child. Round its head was gathered all hope of comfort—of peace—of reward

of her repentance. One of its smiles was enough to brighten up the darkness of a whole day. In her breast—on her knee—in its cradle, she regarded it with a perpetual prayer. And this feeling it was, with all the overwhelming tenderness of affection, all the invigorating power of passion, that, under the hand of God, bore her up and down that fearful mountain's brow, and after the hour of rescue and deliverance, stretched her on the greensward like a corpse.

The rumour of the miracle circled the mountain's base, and a strange story without names had been told to the Wood-ranger of the Cairn-Forest, by a wayfaring man. Anxious to know what truth there was in it, he crossed the hill, and making his way through the sullen crowd, went up to the eminence, and beheld her whom he had so wickedly ruined, and so basely deserted. Hisses, and groans, and hootings, and fierce eyes, and clenched hands assailed and threatened him on every side.

His heart died within him, not in fear, but in remorse. What a worm he felt himself to be! And fain would he have become a worm, that, to escape all that united human scorn, he might have wriggled away in slime into some hole of the earth. But the meek eye of Hannah met his in forgiveness—an un-upbraiding tear—a faint smile of love. All his better nature rose within him, all his worse nature was quelled. "Yes, good people, you do right to cover me with your scorn. But what is your scorn to the wrath of God? The Evil One has often been with me in the woods; the same voice that once whispered me to murder her—but here I am—not to offer retribution—for that may not—will not—must not be—guilt must not mate with innocence. But here I proclaim that innocence. I deserve death, and I am willing here, on this spot, to deliver myself into the hands of justice. Allan Calder—I call on you to seize your prisoner."

The moral sense of the people, when instructed by knowledge and enlightened by religion, what else is it but the voice of God! Their anger subsided into a stern satisfaction—and that soon softened, in sight of her who alone aggrieved alone felt nothing but forgiveness, into a confused compassion for the man who, bold and bad as he had been, had undergone many solitary torments, and nearly fallen in his uncompanioned misery into the power of the Prince of Darkness.

The old clergyman, whom all reverenced, put the contrite man's hand in hers, whom he swore to love and cherish all his days. And, ere summer was over, Hannah was the mistress of a family, in a house not much inferior to a Manse. Her mother, now that not only her daughter's reputation was freed from stain, but her innocence also proved, renewed her youth. And although the worthy schoolmaster, who told us the tale so much better than we have been able to repeat it, confessed that the wood-ranger never became altogether a saint—nor acquired the edifying habit of pulling down the corners of his mouth, and turning up the whites of his eyes—yet he assured us that he never afterwards heard anything very serious laid to his prejudice—that he became in due time an elder of the Kirk—gave his children a religious education—erring only in making rather too much of a pet of his eldest born, whom, even when grown up to manhood, he never called by any other name than the Eaglet.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS AVIARY.

THIRD CANTICLE.

The Raven! In a solitary glen sits down on a stone the roaming pedestrian, beneath the hush and gloom of a thundery sky that has not yet begun to growl, and hears no sounds but that of an occasional big rain-drop, plashing on the bare bent; the crag high overhead sometimes utters a sullen groan—the pilgrim, starting, listens, and the noise is repeated, but instead of a groan, a croak—croak—croak! manifestly from a thing with life. A pause of silence! and hollower and hoarser the croak is heard from the opposite side of the glen. Eyeing the black sultry heaven, he feels the warm plash on his face, but sees no bird on the wing. By-and-by something black lifts itself slowly and heavily up from a precipice, in deep shadow; and before it has cleared the rock-range, and entered the upper region of air, he knows it to be a Raven. The creature seems wroth to be disturbed in his solitude, and in his strong straight-forward flight aims at the head of another glen; but he wheels round at the iron barrier, and, alighting among the heather, folds his huge massy wings, and leaps about as if in anger, with the same savage croak—croak—croak! No other bird so like a demon—and should you chance to break a leg in the desert, and be unable to crawl to a hut, your life is not worth twenty-four hours' purchase. Never was there a single hound in Lord Darlington's packs, since his lordship became a mighty hunter, with nostrils so fine as those of that feathered fiend, covered though they be with strong hairs or bristles, that grimly adorn a bill of formidable dimensions, and apt for digging out eye-socket and splitting skull-structure of dying man or beast. That bill cannot tear in pieces like the eagle's beak, nor are its talons so powerful to smite as to compress—but a better bill

for cut-and-thrust—push, carte, and tierce—the dig dismal and the plunge profound—belongs to no other bird. It inflicts great gashes; nor needs the wound to be repeated on the same spot. Feeder foul and obscene! to thy nostril upturned "into the murky air, sagacious of thy quarry from afar," sweeter is the scent of carrion, than to the panting lover's sense and soul the fragrance of his own virgin's breath and bosom, when, lying in her innocence in his arms, her dishevelled tresses seem laden with something more ethereally pure than "Sabean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest."

The Raven dislikes all animal food that has not a deathy smack. It cannot be thought that he has any reverence or awe of the mystery of life. Neither is he a coward; at least, not such a coward as to fear the dying kick of a lamb or sheep. Yet so long as his victim can stand, or sit, or lie in a strong struggle, the raven keeps aloof—hopping in a circle that narrows and narrows as the sick animal's nostrils keep dilating in convulsions, and its eyes grow dimmer and more dim. When the prey is in the last agonies, croaking, he leaps upon the breathing carcass, and whets his bill upon his own blue-ringed legs, steadied by claws in the fleece, yet not so fiercely inserted as to get entangled and fast. With his large level-crowned head bobbing up and down, and turned a little first to one side and then to another, all the while a self-congratulatory leer in his eye, he unfolds his wings, and then folds them again, twenty or thirty times, as if dubious how to begin to gratify his lust of blood; and frequently, when just on the brink of consummation, jumps off side, back, or throat, and goes dallying about, round and round, and off to a small safe distance, scenting, almost snorting, the smell of the blood running cold, colder, and more cold. At last the poor wretch is still; and then, without waiting till it is stiff, he goes to work earnestly and passionately, and taught by horrid instinct how to reach the entrails, revels in obscene gluttony, and preserves, it may be, eye, lip, palate, and brain, for the last course of his meal, gorged to the throat, incapacitated to return thanks, and with difficulty able either to croak or to fly.

The Raven, it is thought, is in the habit of living upwards of a hundred years, perhaps a couple of centuries. Children

grow into girls, girls into maidens, maidens into wives, wives into widows, widows into old decrepit crones, and crones into dust; and the Raven who wons at the head of the glen, is aware of all the births, baptisms, marriages, deathbeds, and funerals. Certain it is—at least so men say—that he is aware of the deathbeds and the funerals. Often does he flap his wings against door and window of hut, when the wretch within is in extremity, or, sitting on the heather-roof, croaks horror into the dying dream. As the funeral winds its way towards the mountain cemetery he hovers aloft in the air—or, swooping down nearer to the bier, precedes the corpse like a sable saulie. While the party of friends are carousing in the house of death, he too, scorning funeral-baked meats, croaks hoarse hymns and dismal dirges as he is devouring the pet-lamb of the little grandchild of the deceased. The shepherds maintain that the Raven is sometimes heard to laugh. Why not, as well as the hyena? Then it is that he is most diabolical, for he knows that his laughter is prophetic of human death. True it is, and it would be injustice to conceal the fact, much more to deny it, that Ravens of old fed Elijah; but that was the punishment of some old sin committed by Two who before the Flood bore the human shape, and who, soon as the Ark rested on Mount Ararat, flew off to the desolation of swamped forests and the disfigured solitude of the drowned glens. Dying Ravens hide themselves from daylight in burial-places among the rocks, and are seen hobbling into their tombs, as if driven thither by a flock of fears, and crouching under a remorse that disturbs instinct, even as if it were conscience. So sings and says the Celtic superstition—muttered to us in a dream—adding that there are Raven ghosts, great black bundles of feathers, for ever in the forest, night-hunting in famine for prey, emitting a last feeble croak at the blush of dawn, and then all at once invisible.

There can be no doubt that that foolish Quaker, who some twenty years ago perished at the foot of a crag near Red Tarn, "far in the bosom of Helvyllyn," was devoured by ravens. We call him foolish, because no adherent of that sect was ever qualified to find his way among mountains when the day was shortish, and the snow, if not very deep, yet wreathed and pit-falled. In such season and weather, no place so fit for a Quaker as the fireside. Not to insist, however, on that point,

with what glee the few hungry and thirsty old Ravens belonging to the Red Tarn Club must have flocked to the Ordinary! Without asking each other to which part this, that, or the other croaker chose to be helped, the maxim which regulated their behaviour at table was doubtless, "First come, first served." Forthwith each bill was busy, and the scene became animated in the extreme. There must have been great difficulty to the most accomplished of the carrion in stripping the Quaker of his drab. The broad-brim had probably escaped with the first intention, and after going before the wind half across the unfrozen Tarn, capsized, filled, and sunk. Picture to yourself so many devils, all in glossy black feather coats and dark breeches, with waiscoats inclining to blue, pully-hawlying away at the unresisting figure of the follower of Fox, and getting first vexed and then irritated with the pieces of choking soft armour in which, five or six ply thick, his inviting carcass was so provokingly insheathed! First a drab duffle cloak—then a drab wraprascal—then a drab broadcloth coat, made in the oldest fashion—then a drab waistcoat of the same—then a drab under-waistcoat of thinner mould—then a linen-shirt, somewhat drabbish—then a flannel-shirt, entirely so, and most odorous to the nostrils of the members of the Red Tarn Club. All this must have taken a couple of days at the least; so, supposing the majority of members assembled about eight A.M. on the Sabbath morning, it must have been well on to twelve o'clock on Monday night before the club could have comfortably sat down to supper. During these two denuding days, we can well believe that the President must have been hard put to it to keep the secretary, treasurer, chaplain, and other office-bearers, ordinary and extraordinary members, from giving a sly dig at Obadiah's face, so tempting in the sallow hue and rank smell of first corruption. Dead bodies keep well in frost; but the subject had in this case probably fallen from a great height, had his bones broken to smash, his flesh bruised and mangled. The President, therefore, we repeat it, even although a raven of great age and authority, must have had inconceivable difficulty in controlling the Club. The croak of "Order!—order!—Chair!—chair!"—must have been frequent; and had the office not been hereditary, the old gentleman would no doubt have thrown it up, and declared the chair vacant. All obstacles

and obstructions having been by indefatigable activity removed, no attempt, we may well believe, was made by the seneschal to place the guests according to their rank, above or below the salt, and the party sat promiscuously down to a late supper. Not a word was uttered during the first half-hour, till a queer-looking mortal, who had spent several years of his prime of birdhood at old Calgarth, and picked up a tolerable command of the Westmoreland dialect by means of the Hamiltonian system, exclaimed, "I'se weel nee brussen—there be's Mister Wudsworth—Ho, ho, ho!" It was indeed the bard, benighted in the Excursion from Patterdale to Jobson's Cherry-Tree; and the Red Tarn Club, afraid of having their orgies put into blank verse, sailed away in floating fragments beneath the moon and stars.

But over the doom of one true Lover of Nature let us shed a flood of rueful tears; for at what tale shall mortal man weep, if not at the tale of youthful genius and virtue shrouded suddenly in a winding-sheet wreathed of snow by the pitiless tempest! Elate in the joy of solitude, he hurried like a fast-travelling shadow into the silence of the frozen mountains, all beautifully encrusted with pearls, and jewels, and diamonds, beneath the resplendent night-heavens. The din of populous cities had long stunned his brain, and his soul had sickened in the presence of the money-hunting eyes of selfish men, all madly pursuing their multifarious machinations in the great mart of commerce. The very sheeted masts of ships, bearing the flags of foreign countries, in all their pomp and beauty sailing homeward or outward-bound, had become hateful to his spirit—for what were they but the floating enginery of Mammon? Truth, integrity, honour, were all recklessly sacrificed to gain by the friends he loved and had respected most—sacrificed without shame and without remorse—repentance being with them a repentance only over ill-laid schemes of villany—plans for the ruination of widows and orphans, blasted in the bud of their iniquity. The brother of his bosom made him a bankrupt—and for a year the jointure of his widow-mother was unpaid. But she died before the second Christmas—and he was left alone in the world. Poor indeed he was, but not a beggar. A legacy came to him from a distant relation—almost the only one of his name—who died abroad. Small as it was, it was enough to live on—and his

enthusiastic spirit gathering joy from distress, vowed to dedicate itself in some profound solitude to the love of Nature, and the study of her Great Laws. He bade an eternal farewell to cities at the dead of midnight, beside his mother's grave, scarcely distinguishable among the thousand flat stones, sunk, or sinking into the wide churchyard, along which a great thoroughfare of life roared like the sea. And now, for the first time, his sorrow flung from him like a useless garment, he found himself alone among the Cumbrian mountains, and impelled in strong idolatry almost to kneel down and worship the divine beauty of the moon, and "stars that are the poetry of heaven."

Not uninstructed was the wanderer in the lore that links the human heart to the gracious form and aspects of the Mighty Mother. In early youth he had been intended for the Church, and subsequent years of ungrateful and ungenial toils had not extinguished the fine scholarship that native aptitude for learning had acquired in the humble school of the village in which he was born. He had been ripe for College when the sudden death of his father, who had long been at the head of a great mercantile concern, imposed it upon him, as a sacred duty owed to his mother and his sisters, to embark in trade. Not otherwise could he hope ever to retrieve their fortunes—and for ten years for their sake he was a slave, till ruin set him free. Now he was master of his own destiny—and sought some humble hut in that magnificent scenery, where he might pass a blameless life, and among earth's purest joys prepare his soul for heaven. Many such humble huts had he seen during that one bold, bright, beautiful spring winter-day. Each wreath of smoke from the breathing chimneys, while the huts themselves seemed hardly awakened from sleep in the morning-calm, led his imagination up into the profound peace of the sky. In any one of those dwellings, peeping from sheltered dells, or perched on wind-swept eminences, could he have taken up his abode, and sat down contented at the board of their simple inmates. But in the very delirium of a new bliss, the day faded before him—twilight looked lovelier than dream-land in the reflected glimmer of the snow—and thus had midnight found him, in a place so utterly lonesome in its remoteness from all habitations, that even in summer no stranger sought it without the guidance of some

shepherd familiar with the many bewildering passes that stretched away in all directions through among the mountains to distant vales. No more fear or thought had he of being lost in the wilderness, than the ring-dove that flies from forest to forest in the winter season, and, without the aid even of vision, trusts to the instinctive wafting of her wings through the paths of ether.

As he continued gazing on the heavens, the moon all at once lost something of her brightness — the stars seemed fewer in number—and the lustre of the rest as by mist obscured. The blue ethereal frame grew discoloured with streaks of red and yellow—and a sort of dim darkness deepened and deepened on the air, while the mountains appeared higher, and at the same time further off, as if he had been transported in a dream to another region of the earth. A sound was heard, made up of far-mustering winds, echoes from caves, swinging of trees, and the murmur as of a great lake or sea beginning to break on the shore. A few flakes of snow touched his face, and the air grew cold. A clear tarn had a few minutes before glittered with moonbeams, but now it had disappeared. Sleet came thicker and faster, and ere long it was a storm of snow. "O God! my last hour is come!" and scarcely did he hear his own voice in the roaring tempest.

Men have died in dungeons—and their skeletons been found long years afterwards lying on the stone floor, in postures that told through what hideous agonies they had passed into the world of spirits. But no eye saw, no ear heard, and the prison-visitor gathers up, as he shudders, but a dim conviction of some long horror from the bones. One day in spring—long after the snows were melted—except here and there a patch like a flock of sheep on some sunless exposure—a huge Raven rose heavily, as if gorged with prey, before the feet of a shepherd, who, going forward to the spot where the bird had been feeding, beheld a rotting corpse! A dog, itself almost a skeleton, was lying near, and began to whine at his approach. On its collar was the name of its master—a name unknown in that part of the country—and weeks elapsed before any person could be heard of that could tell the history of the sufferer. A stranger came and went—taking the faithful creature with him that had so long watched by the dead—but long before

his arrival the remains had been interred; and you may see the grave, a little way on from the south gate, on your right hand as you enter, not many yards from the Great Yew-Tree in the churchyard of———, not far from the foot of Ullswater.

Gentle reader! we have given you two versions of the same story—and pray, which do you like the best? The first is the most funny, the second the most affecting. We have observed that the critics are not decided on the question of our merits as a writer; some maintaining that we are strongest in humour—others, that our power is in pathos. The judicious declare that our forte lies in both—in the two united, or alternating with each other. "But is it not quite shocking," exclaims some scribbler who has been knouted in Ebony, "to hear so very serious an affair as the death of a Quaker in the snow among mountains, treated with such heartless levity? The man who wrote that description, sir, of the Ordinary of the Red Tarn Club, would not scruple to commit murder!" Why, if killing a scribbler be murder, the writer of that—this—article confesses that he has more than once committed that capital crime. But no intelligent jury, taking into consideration the law as well as the fact—and it is often their duty to do so, let high authorities say what they will—would for a moment hesitate, in any of the cases alluded to, to bring in a verdict of "Justifiable homicide." The gentleman or lady who has honoured us so far with perusal, knows enough of human life, and of their own hearts, to know also that there is no other subject which men of genius—and who ever denied that we are men of genius?—have been accustomed to view in so many ludicrous lights as this same subject of death; and the reason is at once obvious—yet *recherché*—videlicet, Death is, in itself and all that belongs to it, such a sad, cold, wild, dreary, dismal, distracting, and dreadful thing, that at times men talking about it cannot choose but laugh!

Too-hoo—too-hoo—too-whit-too-hoo!—we have got among the Owls. Venerable personages, in truth, they are—perfect Solomons! The spectator, as in most cases of very solemn characters, feels himself at first strongly disposed to commit the gross indecorum of bursting out a-laughing in their face. One does not see the absolute necessity either of man or bird

looking at all times so unaccountably wise. Why will an Owl persist in his stare? Why will a Bishop never lay aside his wig?

People ignorant of Ornithology will stare like the Bird of Wisdom himself on being told that an Owl is an Eagle. Yet, bating a little inaccuracy, it is so. Eagles, kites, hawks, and owls, all belong to the genus Falco. We hear a great deal too much in poetry of the moping Owl, the melancholy Owl, the boding Owl, whereas he neither mopes nor bodes, and is no more melancholy than becomes a gentleman. We also hear of the Owl being addicted to spirituous liquors; and hence the expression, as drunk as an Owl. All this is mere Whig personality, the Owl being a Tory of the old school, and a friend of the ancient establishments of church and state. Nay, the same political party, although certainly the most shortsighted of God's creatures, taunt the Owl with being blind. As blind as an Owl, is a libel in frequent use out of ornithological society. Shut up Lord Jeffrey himself in a hay-barn with a well-built mow, and ask him in the darkness to catch you a few mice, and he will tell you whether or not the Owl be blind. This would be just as fair as to expect the Owl to see, like Lord Jeffrey, through a case in the Parliament House during daylight. Nay, we once heard a writer in Taylor and Hessey call the Owl stupid, he himself having longer ears than any species of Owl extant. What is the positive character of the Owl may perhaps appear by-and-by; but we have seen that, describing his character by negations, we may say that he resembles Napoleon Buonaparte much more than Joseph Hume or Alderman Wood. He is not moping—not boding—not melancholy—not a drunkard—not blind—not stupid; as much as it would be prudent to say of any man, whether editor or contributor, in her Majesty's dominions.

We really have no patience with people who persist in all manner of misconceptions regarding the character of birds. Birds often appear to such persons, judging from, of, and by themselves, to be in mind and manners the reverse of their real character. They judge the inner bird by outward circumstances inaccurately observed. There is the owl. How little do the people of England know of him—even of him the barn-door and domestic owl—yea, even at this day—we

had almost said the Poets! Shakespeare, of course, and his freres, knew him to be a merry fellow—quite a madcap—and so do now all the Lakers. But Cowper had his doubts about it; and Gray, as every schoolboy knows, speaks of him like an old wife. The force of folly can go no further, than to imagine an owl complaining to the moon of being disturbed by people walking in a country churchyard. And among all our present bardlings, the owl is supposed to be constantly on the eve of suicide. If it were really so, he ought in a Christian country to be pitied, not pelted, as he is sure to be when accidentally seen in sunlight—for melancholy is a misfortune, especially when hereditary and constitutional, as it is popularly believed to be in the Black-billed Bubo, and certainly was in Dr Johnson. In young masters and misses we can pardon any childishness; but we cannot pardon the antipathy to the owl entertained by the manly minds of grown-up English clodhoppers, ploughmen, and threshers. They keep terriers to kill rats and mice in barns, and they shoot the owls, any one of whom we would cheerfully back against the famous Billy. "The very commonest observation teaches us," says the author of the "Gardens of the Menagerie," "that they are in reality the best and most efficient protectors of our cornfields and granaries from the devastating pillage of the swarms of mice and other small *rodents*." Nay, by their constant destruction of these petty but dangerous enemies, the owls, he says, "earn an unquestionable title to be regarded as among the *most active of the friends of man;* a title which only one or two among them occasionally forfeit by their aggressions on the defenceless poultry." Roger or Dolly beholds him in the act of murdering a duckling, and, like other light-headed, giddy, unthinking creatures, they forget all the service he has done the farm, the parish, and the state; he is shot *in the act*, and nailed, wide-extended in cruel spread-eagle, on the barn-door. Others again call him dull and shortsighted —nay, go the length of asserting that he is stupid—as stupid as an owl. Why, our excellent fellow, when you have the tithe of the talent of the common owl, and know half as well how to use it, you may claim the medal.

The eagles, kites, and hawks, hunt by day. The Owl is the Nimrod of the Night. Then, like one who shall be nameless, he sails about seeking those whom he may devour.

To do him justice, he has a truly ghost-like head and shoulders of his own. What horror to the "small birds rejoicing in spring's leafy bowers," fast-locked we were going to say in each other's arms, but sitting side by side in the same cosy nuptial nest, to be startled out of their love-dreams by the great lamp-eyed, beaked face of a horrible monster with horns, picked out of feathered bed, and wafted off in one bunch, within talons, to pacify a set of hissing, and snappish, and shapeless powder-puffs, in the loophole of a barn? In a house where a cat is kept, mice are much to be pitied. They are so infatuated with the smell of a respectable larder, that to leave the premises, they confess, is impossible. Yet every hour—nay, every minute of their lives—must they be in the fear of being leaped out upon by four velvet paws—and devoured with kisses from a whiskered mouth, and a throat full of that incomprehensible music—a purr. Life, on such terms, seems to us anything but desirable. But the truth is, that mice in the fields are not a whit better off. Owls are cats with wings. Skimming along the grass tops, they stop in a momentary hover, let drop a talon, and away with Mus, his wife, and small family of blind children. It is the white, or yellow, or barn, or church, or Screech-Owl, or Gilley-Owlet, that behaves in this way; and he makes no bones of a mouse, uniformly swallowing him alive. Our friend, we suspect, though no drunkard, is somewhat of a glutton. In one thing we agree with him, that there is no sort of harm in a heavy supper. There, however, we are guilty of some confusion of ideas; for what to us, who rise in the morning, seems a supper, is to him who gets up at evening twilight, a breakfast. We therefore agree with him in thinking that there is no sort of harm in a heavy breakfast. After having passed a pleasant night in eating and flirting, he goes to bed betimes about four o'clock in the morning; and, as Bewick observes, makes a blowing hissing noise, resembling the snoring of a man. Indeed nothing can be more diverting to a person annoyed by blue devils, than to look at a white Owl and his wife asleep. With their heads gently inclined towards each other, there they keep snoring away like any Christian couple. Should the one make a pause, the other that instant awakes, and, fearing something may be wrong with his spouse, opens a pair of glimmering winking eyes, and inspects the adjacent

physiognomy with the scrutinising stare of a village apothecary. If all be right, the concert is resumed, the snore sometimes degenerating into a sort of snivel, and the snivel into a blowing hiss. First time we heard this noise was in a churchyard when we were mere boys, having ventured in after dark to catch the minister's colt for a gallop over to the parish capital, where there was a dancing-school ball. There had been a nest of Owls in some hole in the spire; but we never doubted for a moment that the noise of snoring, blowing, hissing, and snapping proceeded from a testy old gentleman that had been buried that forenoon, and had come alive again a day after the fair. Had we reasoned the matter a little, we must soon have convinced ourselves that there was no ground for alarm to us at least; for the noise was like that of some one half stifled, and little likely to heave up from above him a six-feet-deep load of earth—to say nothing of the improbability of his being able to unscrew the coffin from the inside. Be that as it may, we cleared about a dozen of decent tombstones at three jumps—the fourth took us over a wall five feet high within and about fifteen without, and landed us, with a squash, in a cabbage-garden, enclosed on the other three sides by a house and a holly-hedge. The house was the sexton's, who, apprehending the stramash to proceed from a resurrectionary surgeon mistaken in his latitude, thrust out a long duck-gun from a window in the thatch, and swore to blow out our brains if we did not instantly surrender ourselves, and deliver up the corpse. It was in vain to cry out our name, which he knew as well as his own. He was deaf to reason, and would not withdraw his patterero till we had laid down the corpse. He swore that he saw the sack in the moonlight. This was a horse-cloth with which we had intended to saddle the "cowt," and that had remained, during the supernatural agency under which we laboured, clutched unconsciously and convulsively in our grasp. Long was it ere Davie Donald would see us in our true light—, but at length he drew on his Kilmarnock nightcap, and coming out with a bouet, let us through the trance and out of the front door, thoroughly convinced, till we read Bewick, that old Southfield was not dead, although in a very bad way indeed. Let this be a lesson to schoolboys not to neglect the

science of natural history, and to study the character of the White Owl.

Owls—both White and common Brown, are not only useful in a mountainous country, but highly ornamental. How serenely beautiful their noiseless flight; a flake of snow is not winnowed through the air more softly-silent! Gliding along the dark shadows of a wood, how spiritual the motion—how like the thought of a dream! And then, during the hushed midnight hours, how jocund the whoop and hollo from the heart of a sycamore—grey rock, or ivied Tower! How the Owls of Windermere must laugh at the silly Lakers, that under the garish eye of day, enveloped in clouds of dust, whirl along in rattling post-shays in pursuit of the picturesque! Why, the least imaginative Owl that ever hunted mice by moonlight on the banks of Windermere, must know the character of its scenery better than any poetaster that ever dined on char at Bowness or Lowood. The long quivering lines of light illumining some sylvan isle—the evening-star shining from the water to its counterpart in the sky—the glorious phenomenon of the double moon—the night-colours of the woods—and, once in the three years perhaps, that loveliest and most lustrous of celestial forms, the lunar rainbow—all these and many more beauteous and magnificent sights are familiar to the Owls of Windermere. And who know half so well as they do the echoes of Furness, and Applethwaite, and Loughrigg, and Landale, all the way on to Dungeon-Gill and Pavey-Ark, Scawfell and the Great Gable, and that sea of mountains, of which every wave has a name? Midnight—when asleep so still and silent—seems inspired with the joyous spirit of the Owls in their revelry—and answers to their mirth and merriment through all her clouds. The Moping Owl, indeed!—the Boding Owl, forsooth!—the Melancholy Owl, you blockhead!—why, they are the most cheerful—joy-portending—and exulting of God's creatures! Their flow of animal spirits is incessant—crowing-cocks are a joke to them—blue devils are to them unknown—not one hypochondriac in a thousand barns—and the Man-in-the-Moon acknowledges that he never heard one of them utter a complaint.

But what say ye to an Owl, not only like an eagle in plum-

age, but equal to the largest eagle in size—and therefore named, from the King of Birds, the Eagle Owl. Mr Selby! you have done justice to the monarch of the Bubos. We hold ourselves to be persons of tolerable courage, as the world goes—but we could not answer for ourselves showing fight with such a customer, were he to waylay us by night in a wood. In comparison, Jack Thurtell looked harmless. No—that bold, bright-eyed murderer, with Horns on his head like those on Michael Angelo's statue of Moses, would never have had the cruel cowardice to cut the weasand, and smash out the brains of such a miserable wretch as Weare! True, he is fond of blood—and where's the harm in that? It is his nature. But if there be any truth in the science of Physiognomy—and be that of Phrenology what it will, most assuredly there is truth in it—the original of that Owl, for whose portrait the world is indebted to Mr Selby, and Sir Thomas Lawrence never painted a finer one of Prince or Potentate of any Holy or Unholy Alliance, must have despised Probert from the very bottom of his heart. No prudent Eagle but would be exceedingly desirous of keeping on good terms with him—devilish shy, i' faith, of giving him any offence by the least hauteur of manner, or the slightest violation of etiquette. An Owl of this character and calibre is not afraid to show his horns at mid-day on the mountain. The Fox is not over and above fond of him—and his claws can kill a cub at a blow. The Doe sees the monster sitting on the back of her fawn, and, maternal instinct overcome by horror, bounds into the brake, and leaves the pretty creature to its fate. Thank Heaven, he is, in Great Britain, a rare bird! Tempest-driven across the Northern Ocean from his native forests in Russia, an occasional visitant he "frightens this isle from its propriety," and causes a hideous screaming through every wood he haunts. Some years ago, one was killed in the upland moors in the county of Durham—and, of course, paid a visit to Mr Bullock's Museum. Eagle-like in all its habits, it builds its nest on high rocks—sometimes on the loftiest trees—and seldom lays more than two eggs. One is one more than enough—and we who fly by night trust never to fall in with a live specimen of the Strix-Bubo of Linnæus.

But largest and loveliest of all the silent night-gliders—the Snowy Owl! Gentle reader—if you long to see his

picture, we have told you where it may be found ;—and in the College Museum, within a glass vase on the central table in the Palace of Stuffed Birds, you may admire his outward very self—the semblance of the Owl he was when he used to eye the moon shining over the Northern Sea :—but if you would see the noble and beautiful Creature himself, in all his living glory, you must seek him through the long summer twilight among the Orkney or the Shetland Isles. The Snowy Owl dearly loves the snow—and there is, we believe, a tradition among them, that their first ancestor and ancestress rose up together from a melting snow-wreath on the very last day of a Greenland winter, when all at once the bright fields reappear. The race still inhabits that frozen coast—being common, indeed, through all the regions of the Arctic Circle. It is numerous on the shores of Hudson's Bay, in Norway, Sweden, and Lapland—but in the temperate parts of Europe and America "rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno."

We defy all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe ; and what countless cross-legged fractional parts of men—who, like the beings of whom they are constituents, are thought to double their numbers every thirty years—must not the four quarters of the earth, in their present advanced state of civilisation, contain !—we defy, we say, all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe to construct such a surtout as that of the Snowy Owl, covering him, with equal luxury and comfort, in summer's heat and winter's cold. The elements, in all their freezing fury, cannot reach the body of the bird through that beautiful down-mail. Well guarded are the opening of those great eyes. Neither the driving dust, nor the searching sleet, nor the sharp frozen snow-stour, give him the ophthalmia. Gutta Serena is to him unknown—no Snowy Owl was ever couched for cataract—no need has he for an oculist, should he live an hundred years ; and were they to attempt any operation on his lens or iris, how he would hoot at Alexander and Wardrope !

Night, doubtless, is the usual season of his prey ; but he does not shun the day, and is sometimes seen hovering unhurt in the sunshine. The red or black grouse flies as if pursued by a ghost ; but the Snowy Owl, little slower than the eagle, in dreadful silence overtakes his flight, and then death is sudden and sure. Hawking is, or was, a noble pas-

time—and we have now prevented our eyes from glancing at Jer-falcon, Peregrine, or Goshawk; but Owling, we do not doubt, would be noways inferior sport; and were it to become prevalent in modern times, as Hawking was in times of old, why, each lady, as Venus already fair, with an Owl on her wrist, would look as wise as Minerva.

But our soul sickens at all those dreams of blood! and fain would turn away from fierce eye, cruel beak, and tearing talon —war-weapons of them that delight in wounds and death— to the contemplation of creatures whose characteristics are the love of solitude—shy gentleness of manner—the tender devotion of mutual attachment—and, in field or forest, a lifelong passion for peace.

CHRISTOPHER IN HIS AVIARY.

FOURTH CANTICLE.

Welcome then the Ring-Dove—the Quest—or Cushat, for that is the very bird we have had in our imagination. There is his full-length portrait, stealthily sketched as the Solitary was sitting on a tree. You must catch him napping, indeed, before he will allow you an opportunity of colouring him on the spot from nature. It is not that he is more jealous or suspicious of man's approach than other bird; for never shall we suffer ourselves to believe that any tribe of the descendants of the Dove that brought to the Ark the olive tidings of re-appearing earth, can in their hearts hate or fear the race of the children of man. But Nature has made the Cushat a lover of the still forest-gloom; and therefore, when his lonesome haunts are disturbed or intruded on, he flies to some yet profounder, some more central solitude, and folds his wing in the hermitage of a Yew, sown in the time of the ancient Britons.

It is the Stock-Dove, we believe, not the Ring-Dove, from whom are descended all the varieties of the races of Doves. What tenderer praise can we give them all, than that the Dove is the emblem of Innocence, and that the name of innocence—not of frailty—is Woman? When Hamlet said the reverse, he was thinking, you know, of the Queen—not of Ophelia. Is not woman by nature chaste as the Dove—as the Dove faithful? Sitting all alone with her babe in her bosom, is she not as a Dove devoted to her own nest? Murmureth she not a pleasant welcome to her wearied home-returned husband, even like the Dove among the woodlands when her mate re-alights on the pine? Should her spouse be taken from her and disappear, doth not her heart sometimes break, as they say it happens to the Dove? But oftener far, findeth not the widow

that her orphans are still fed by her own hand, that is filled with good things by Providence; till grown up, and able to shift for themselves, away they go—just as the poor Dove lamenteth for her mate in the snare of the fowler, yet feedeth her young continually through the whole day, till away too go they—alas, in neither case, perhaps, ever more to return!

We dislike all favouritism, all foolish and capricious partiality for particular bird or beast; but dear, old, sacred associations, will *tell* upon all one thinks or feels towards any place or person in this world of ours, near or remote. God forbid we should criticise the Cushat! We desire to speak of him as tenderly as of a friend buried in our early youth. Too true it is, that often and oft, when schoolboys, have we striven to steal upon him in his solitude, and to shoot him to death. In morals, and in religion, it would be heterodox to deny that the will is as the deed. Yet in cases of high and low-way robbery and murder, there does seem, treating the subject not in philosophical but popular style, to be some little difference between the two; at least we hope so, for otherwise we can with difficulty imagine one person not deserving to be ordered for execution, on Wednesday next, between the hours of eight and nine ante-meridian. Happily, however, for our future peace of mind, and not improbably for the whole confirmation of our character, our Guardian Genius—(every boy has one constantly at his side, both during school and play hours, though it must be confessed sometimes a little remiss in his duty, for the nature even of angelical beings is imperfect)—always so contrived it, that with all our cunning we never could kill a Cushat. Many a long hour—indeed whole Saturdays—have we lain perdue among broom and whins, the beautiful green and yellow skirting of sweet Scotia's woods, watching his egress or ingress, our gun ready cocked, and finger on trigger, that on the flapping of his wings not a moment might be lost in bringing him to the ground. But couch where we might, no Cushat ever came near our insidious lair. Now and then a Magpie—birds who, by the by, when they suspect you of any intention of shooting them, are as distant in their manners as Cushats themselves, otherwise as impudent as Cockneys—would come, hopping in continual tail-jerks, with his really beautiful plumage, if one could bring oneself to think it so, and then sport the pensive within twenty yards of the muzzle

of Brown-Bess, impatient to let fly. But our soul burned, our heart panted for a Cushat; and in that strong fever-fit of passion, could we seek to slake our thirst for that wild blood with the murder of a thievish eavesdropper of a Pye? The Blackbird, too, often dropt out of the thicket into an open glade in the hazel-shaws, and the distinctness of his yellow bill showed he was far within shot-range. Yet, let us do ourselves justice, we never in all our born days dreamt of shooting a Blackbird —him that scares away sadness from the woodland twilight gloom, at morn or eve; whose anthem, even in those dim days when Nature herself it might be well thought were melancholy, forceth the firmament to ring with joy. Once "the snow-white cony sought its evening meal," unconscious of our dangerous vicinity, issuing with erected ears from the wood edge. That last was, we confess, such a temptation to touch the trigger, that had we resisted it we must have been either more or less than boy. We fired; and kicking up his heels, doubtless in fright, but as it then seemed to us, during our disappointment, much rather in frolic—nay, absolute derision—away bounced Master Rabbit to his burrow, without one particle of soft silvery wool on sward or bush, to bear witness to our unerring aim. As if the branch on which he had been sitting were broken, away then went the crashing Cushat through the intermingling sprays. The free flapping of his wings was soon heard in the air above the tree-tops, and ere we could recover from our almost bitter amazement, the creature was murmuring to his mate on her shallow nest—a far-off murmur, solitary and profound—to reach unto which, through the tangled mazes of the forest, would have required a separate sense, instinct, or faculty, which we did not possess. So, skulking out of our hiding-place, we made no comment on the remark of homeward-plodding labourer, who had heard the report, and now smelt the powder—"Cushats are geyan kittle birds to kill"—but returned, with our shooting-bag as empty as our stomach, to the Manse.

"Why do the birds sing on Sunday?" said once a little boy to us—and we answered him in a lyrical ballad, which we have lost. But although the birds certainly do sing on Sunday—behaviour that with our small gentle Calvinist, who dearly loved them, caused some doubts of their being so innocent as during the week-days they appeared to be—we

cannot set down their fault to the score of ignorance. Is it in the holy superstition of the world-wearied heart that man believes the inferior creatures to be conscious of the calm of the Sabbath, and that they know it to be the day of our rest? Or is it that we transfer the feeling of our inward calm to all the goings-on of Nature, and thus imbue them with a character of reposing sanctity, existing only in our own spirits? Both solutions are true. The instincts of those creatures we know only in their symptoms and their effects, in the wonderful range of action over which they reign. Of the instincts themselves—as feelings or ideas—we know not anything, nor ever can know; for an impassable gulf separates the nature of those that may be to perish, from ours that are to live for ever. But their power of memory, we must believe, is not only capable of minutest retention, but also stretches back to afar—and some power or other they do possess, that gathers up the past experience into rules of conduct that guide them in their solitary or gregarious life. Why, therefore, should not the birds of Scotland know the Sabbath-day? On that day the Water-Ouzel is never disturbed by angler among the murmurs of his own waterfall; and, as he flits down the banks and braes of the burn, he sees no motion, he hears no sound about the cottage that is the boundary of his furthest flight—for "the dizzying mill-wheel rests." The merry-nodding rooks, that in spring-time keep following the very heels of the ploughman—may they not know it to be Sabbath, when all the horses are standing idle in the field, or taking a gallop by themselves round the head-rig? Quick of hearing are birds—one and all—and in every action of their lives are obedient to sounds. May they not, then—do they not connect a feeling of perfect safety with the tinkle of the small kirk-bell? The very jay himself is not shy of people on their way to worship. The magpie, that never sits more than a minute at a time in the same place on a Saturday, will on the Sabbath remain on the kirkyard wall with all the composure of a dove. The whole feathered creation know our hours of sleep. They awake before us; and ere the earliest labourer has said his prayers, have not the woods and valleys been ringing with their hymns? Why, therefore, may not they, who know, each week-day, the hour of our lying down and our rising up, know also the day of our general rest? The animals whose

lot is labour, shall they not know it? Yes; the horse on that day sleeps in shade or sunshine without fear of being disturbed—his neck forgets the galling collar, "and there are forty feeding like one," all well knowing that their fresh meal on the tender herbage will not be broken in upon before the dews of next morning, ushering in a new day to them of toil or travel.

So much for our belief in the knowledge, instinctive or from a sort of reason, possessed by the creatures of the inferior creation of the heaven-appointed Sabbath to man and beast. But it is also true that we transfer our inward feelings to their outward condition, and with our religious spirit imbue all the ongoings of animated and even inanimated life. There is always a shade of melancholy, a tinge of pensiveness, a touch of pathos, in all profound rest. Perhaps because it is so much in contrast with the turmoil of our ordinary being. Perhaps because the soul, when undisturbed, will, from the impulse of its own divine nature, have high, solemn, and awful thoughts. In such state, it transmutes all things into a show of sympathy with itself. The church-spire, rising high above the smoke and stir of a town, when struck by the sun-fire, seems, on a market-day, a tall building in the air, that may serve as a guide to people from a distance flocking into the bazaars. The same church-spire, were its loud-tongued bell to call from aloft on the gathering multitude below, to celebrate the anniversary of some great victory, Waterloo or Trafalgar, would appear to stretch up its stature triumphantly into the sky—so much the more triumphantly, if the standard of England were floating from its upper battlements. But to the devout eye of faith, doth it not seem to express its own character, when on the Sabbath it performs no other office than to point to heaven?

So much for the second solution. But independently of both, no wonder that all nature seems to rest on the Sabbath; for it doth rest—all of it, at least, that appertains to man and his condition. If the Fourth Commandment be kept—at rest is all the household—and all the fields round it are at rest. Calm flows the current of human life, on that gracious day, throughout all the glens and valleys of Scotland, as a stream that wimples in the morning sunshine, freshened but not flooded with the soft-falling rain of a summer night. The

spiral smoke-wreath above the cottage is not calmer than the motion within. True, that the wood warblers do not cease their songs; but the louder they sing, the deeper is the stillness. And what perfect blessedness, when it is only joy that is astir in rest!

Loud-flapping Cushat! it was thou that inspiredst these solemn fancies; and we have only to wish thee, for thy part contributed to our Recreations, now that the acorns of autumn must be well-nigh consumed, many a plentiful repast, amid the multitude of thy now congregated comrades, in the cleared stubble lands—as severe weather advances, and the ground becomes covered with snow, regales undisturbed by fowler, on the tops of turnip, rape, and other cruciform plants, which all of thy race affect so passionately—and soft blow the sea-breezes on thy unruffled plumage, when thou takest thy winter's walk with kindred myriads on the shelly shore, and for a season minglest with gull and seamew—apart every tribe, one from the other, in the province of its own peculiar instinct—yet all mysteriously taught to feed or sleep together within the roar or margin of the main.

Sole-sitting Cushat! We see thee through the yew-tree's shade, on some day of the olden time, but when or where we remember not—for what has place or time to do with the vision of a dream? That we see thee is all we know, and that serenely beautiful thou art! Most pleasant is it to dream, and to know we dream! By sweet volition we keep ourselves half asleep and half awake; and all our visions of thought, as they go swimming along, partake at once of reality and imagination. Fiction and truth—clouds, shadows, phantoms and phantasms—ether, sunshine, substantial forms and sounds that have a being, blending together in a scene created by us, and partly impressed upon us, and which one motion of the head on the pillow may dissolve, or deepen into more oppressive delight! In some such dreaming state of mind are we now; and, gentle reader, if thou art broad awake, lay aside the visionary volume, or read a little longer, and likely enough is it that thou too mayest fall half asleep. If so, let thy drowsy eyes still pursue the glimmering paragraphs—and wafted away wilt thou feel thyself to be into the heart of a Highland forest, that knows no bounds but those of the uncertain sky.

Away from our remembrance fades the noisy world of men into a silent glimmer—and now it is all no more than a mere faint thought. On—on—on! through briery brake—matted thicket—grassy glade—On—on—on! further into the Forest! What a confusion of huge stones, rocks, knolls, all tumbled together into a chaos—not without its stern and sterile beauty! Still are there, above, blue glimpses of the sky—deep though the umbrage be, and wide-flung the arms of the oaks, and of pines in their native wilderness gigantic as oaks, and extending as broad a shadow. Now the firmament has vanished—and all is twilight. Immense stems, "in number without number numberless,"—bewildering eye and soul—all still—silent—steadfast—and so would they be in a storm. For what storm—let it rage aloft as it might, till the surface of the forest toss and roar like the sea—could force its path through these many million trunks? The thunder-stone might split that giant there—how vast! how magnificent!—but the brother by his side would not tremble; and the sound—in the awful width of the silence—what more would it be than that of the woodpecker alarming the insects of one particular tree!

Poor wretch that we are!—to us the uncompanioned silence of the solitude hath become terrible. More dreadful is it than the silence of the tomb; for there, often arise responses to the unuttered soliloquies of the pensive heart. But this is as the silence, not of Time, but of Eternity. No burial heaps—no mounds—no cairns! It is not as if man had perished here, and been forgotten; but as if this were a world in which there had been neither living nor dying. Too utter is the solitariness even for the ghosts of dead! For they are thought to haunt the burial-places of what once was their bodies—the chamber where the spirit breathed its final farewell—the spot of its transitory love and delight, or of its sin and sorrow—to gaze with troubled tenderness on the eyes that once they worshipped—with cold ear to drink the music of the voices long ago adored; and in all their permitted visitations, to express, if but by the beckoning of the shadow of a hand, some unextinguishable longing after the converse of the upper world, even within the gates of the grave.

A change comes over us. Deep and still as is the solitude, we are relieved of our awe, and out of the forest-gloom arise

images of beauty that come and go, gliding as on wings, or, statue-like, stand in the glades, like the sylvan deities to whom of old belonged, by birthright, all the regions of the woods. On—on—on !—further into the Forest !—and let the awe of imagination be still further tempered by the delight breathed even from any one of the lovely names sweet-sounding through the famous fables of antiquity. Dryad, Hamadryad ! Faunus ! Sylvanus !—Now, alas ! ye are but names, and no more ! Great Pan himself is dead, or here he would set up his reign. But what right has such a dreamer to dream of the dethroned deities of Greece ? The language they spoke is not his language ; yet the words of the great poets who sang of gods and demigods, are beautiful in their silent meanings as they meet his adoring eyes ; and, mighty Lyrists ! has he not often floated down the temple-crowned and altar-shaded rivers of your great Choral Odes ?

On—on—on !—further into the Forest !—unless, indeed, thou dreadest that the limbs that bear on thy fleshy tabernacle may fail, and the body, left to itself, sink down and die. Ha ! such fears thou laughest to scorn ; for from youth upwards thou hast dallied with the wild and perilous : and what but the chill delight in which thou hast so often shivered in threatening solitude brought thee here ! These dens are not dungeons, nor are we a thrall. Yet if dungeons they must be called—and they are deep, and dark, and grim—ten thousand gates hath this great prison-house, and wide open are they all. So on—on—on !—further into the Forest ! But who shall ascend to its summit ? Eagles and dreams. Round its base we go, rejoicing in the new-found day, and once more cheered and charmed with the music of birds. Say whence came, ye scientific world-makers, these vast blocks of granite ? Was it fire or water, think ye, that hung in air the semblance of yon Gothic cathedral, without nave, or chancel, or aisle—a mass of solid rock ? Yet it looks like the abode of Echoes ; and haply when there is thunder, rolls out its lengthening shadow of sound to the ear of the solitary shepherd afar off on Cairngorm.

On—on—on !—further into the Forest ! Now on all sides leagues of ancient trees surround us, and we are safe as in the grave from the persecuting love or hatred of friends or foes. The sun shall not find us by day, nor the moon by

night. Were our life forfeited to what are called the laws, how could the laws discover the criminal? How could they drag us from the impenetrable gloom of this sylvan sanctuary? And if here we chose to perish by suicide or natural death—and famine is a natural death—what eye would ever look on our bones? Raving all; but so it often is with us in severest solitude—our dreams will be hideous with sin and death.

Hideous, said we, with sin and death? Thoughts that came flying against us like vultures, like vultures have disappeared, disappointed of their prey, and afraid to fix their talons in a thing alive. Hither—by some secret and sacred impulse within the soul, that often knoweth not the sovereign virtue of its own great desires—have we been led as into a penitentiary, where, before the altar of nature, we may lay down the burden of guilt or remorse, and walk out of the Forest a heaven-pardoned man. What guilt?—O my soul! canst thou think of Him who inhabiteth eternity, and ask what guilt? What remorse?—For the dereliction of duty every day since thou received'st from Heaven the understanding of good and of evil. All our past existence gathers up into one dread conviction, that every man that is born of woman is a sinner, and worthy of everlasting death. Yet with the same dread conviction is interfused a knowledge, clear as the consciousness of present being, that the soul will live for ever. What was the meaning, O my soul! of all those transitory joys and griefs—of all those fears, hopes, loves, that so shook, each in its own fleeting season, the very foundations on which thy being in this life is laid? Anger, wrath, hatred, pride, and ambition—what are they all but so many shapes of sin coeval with thy birth? That sudden entrance of heaven's light into the Forest, was like the opening of the eye of God! And our spirit stands ashamed of its nakedness, because of the foulness and pollution of sin. But the awful thoughts that have travelled through its chambers have ventilated, swept, and cleansed them—and let us break away from beneath the weight of confession.

Conscience! Speak not of weak and fantastic fears—of abject superstitions—and of all that wild brood of dreams that have for ages been laws to whole nations; though we might speak of them—and, without violation of the spirit of true philosophy, call upon them to bear testimony to the truth.

But think of the calm, purified, enlightened, and elevated conscience of the highest natures—from which objectless fear has been excluded—and which hears, in its stillness, the eternal voice of God. What calm celestial joy fills all the being of a good man, when conscience tells him he is obeying God's law! What dismal fear and sudden remorse assail him, whenever he swerves but one single step out of the right path that is shining before his feet! It is not a mere selfish terror—it is not the dread of punishment only that appals him—for, on the contrary, he can calmly look on the punishment which he knows his guilt has incurred, and almost desires that it should be inflicted, that the incensed power may be appeased. It is the consciousness of offence that is unendurable—not the fear of consequent suffering; it is the degradation of sin that his soul deplores—it is the guilt which he would expiate, if possible, in torments; it is the united sense of wrong, sin, guilt, degradation, shame, and remorse, that renders a moment's pang of the conscience more terrible to the good than years of any other punishment—and it thus is the power of the human soul to render its whole life miserable by its very love of that virtue which it has fatally violated. This is a passion which the soul could not suffer—unless it were immortal. Reason, so powerful in the highest minds, would escape from the vain delusion; but it is in the highest minds where reason is most subjected to this awful power—they would seek reconcilement with offended Heaven by the loss of all the happiness that earth ever yielded—and would rejoice to pour out their heart's blood if it could wipe away from the conscience the stain of one deep transgression! These are not the high-wrought and delusive states of mind of religious enthusiasts, passing away with the bodily agitation of the dreamer; but they are the feelings of the loftiest of men's sons—and when the troubled spirit has escaped from their burden, or found strength to support it, the conviction of their reasonableness and of their awful reality remains; nor can it be removed from the minds of the wise and virtuous, without the obliteration from the tablets of memory of all the moral judgments which conscience has there recorded.

It is melancholy to think that even in our own day, a philosopher, and one of high name too, should have spoken

slightingly of the universal desire of immortality, as no argument at all in proof of it, because arising inevitably from the regret with which all men must regard the relinquishment of this life. By thus speaking of the desire as a delusion necessarily accompanying the constitution of mind which it has pleased the Deity to bestow on us, such reasoners but darken the mystery both of man and of Providence. But this desire of immortality is not of the kind they say it is, nor does it partake, in any degree, of the character of a blind and weak feeling of regret at merely leaving this present life. "I would not live alway," is a feeling which all men understand—but who can endure the momentary thought of annihilation? Thousands, and tens of thousands—awful a thing as it is to die — are willing to do so — "passing through nature to eternity"—nay, when the last hour comes, death almost always finds his victim ready, if not resigned. To leave earth, and all the light both of the sun and of the soul, is a sad thought to us all—transient as are human smiles, we cannot bear to see them no more—and there is a beauty that binds us to life in the tears of tenderness that the dying man sees gushing for his sake. But between that regret for departing loves and affections, and all the gorgeous or beautiful shows of this earth—between that love and the dread of annihilation, there is no connection. The soul can bear to part with all it loves—the soft voice—the kindling smile—the starting tear—and the profoundest sighs of all by whom it is beloved; but it cannot bear to part with its existence. It cannot even believe the possibility of that which yet it may darkly dread. Its loves—its passions—its joys—its agonies are *not itself*. They may perish, but it is imperishable. Strip it of all it has seen, touched, enjoyed, or suffered—still it seems to survive; bury all it knew, or could know in the grave—but itself cannot be trodden down into the corruption. It sees nothing like itself in what perishes, except in dim analogies that vanish before its last profound self-meditation —and though it parts with its mortal weeds at last, as with a garment, its life is felt at last to be something not even in contrast with the death of the body, but to flow on like a flood, that we believe continues still to flow after it has entered into the unseen solitude of some boundless desert.

"Behind the cloud of death,
Once, I beheld a sun ; a sun which gilt
That sable cloud, and turn'd it all to gold.
How the grave's alter'd ! fathomless as hell !
A real hell to those who dream'd of heaven,
Annihilation ! How it yawns before me !
Next moment I may drop from thought, from sense,
The privilege of angels and of worms,
An outcast from existence ! and this spirit,
This all-pervading, this all-conscious soul,
This particle of energy divine,
Which travels nature, flies from star to star,
And visits gods, and emulates their powers,
For ever is extinguish'd."

If intellect be, indeed, doomed utterly to perish, why may not we ask God, in that deep despair which, in that case, must inevitably flow from the consciousness of those powers with which He has at once blessed and cursed us—why that intellect, whose final doom is death, and that final doom within a moment, finds no thought that can satisfy it but that of Life, and no idea in which its flight can be lost but that of Eternity? If this earth were at once the soul's cradle and her tomb, why should that cradle have been hung amid the stars, and that tomb illumined by their eternal light? If, indeed, a child of the clay, was not this earth, with all its plains, forests, mountains, and seas, capacious enough for the dreams of that creature whose course was finally to be extinguished in the darkness of its bosom? What had we to do with planets, and suns, and spheres, "and all the dread magnificence of heaven?" Were we framed merely that we might for a few years rejoice in the beauty of the stars, as in that of the flowers beneath our feet? And ought we to be grateful for those transitory glimpses of the heavens, as for the fading splendour of the earth? But the heavens are not an idle show, hung out for the gaze of that idle dreamer Man. They are the work of the Eternal God, and He has given us power therein to read and to understand His glory. It is not our eyes only that are dazzled by the face of heaven—our souls can comprehend the laws by which that face is overspread by its celestial smiles. The dwelling-place of our spirits is already in the heavens. Well are we entitled to give names unto the stars; for we know the moment of their rising and

their setting, and can be with them at every part of their shining journey through the boundless ether. While generations of men have lived, died, and are buried, the astronomer thinks of the golden orb that shone centuries ago within the vision of man, and lifts up his eye undoubting, at the very moment when it again comes glorious on its predicted return. Were the Eternal Being to slacken the course of a planet, or increase even the distance of the fixed stars, the decree would be soon known on earth. Our ignorance is great, because so is our knowledge; for it is from the mightiness and vastness of what we do know that we imagine the illimitable unknown creation. And to whom has God made these revelations? To a worm that next moment is to be in darkness? To a piece of earth momentarily raised into breathing existence? To a soul perishable as the telescope through which it looks into the gates of heaven?

> "Oh! star-eyed science, hast thou wander'd there
> To waft us home—the message of despair?"

No; there is no despair in the gracious light of heaven. As we travel through those orbs, we feel indeed that we have no power, but we feel that we have mighty knowledge. We can create nothing, but we can dimly understand all. It belongs to God only to *create*, but it is given to man to *know*—and that knowledge is itself an assurance of immortality.

> "Renounce St Evremont, and read St Paul.
> Ere rapt by miracle, by reason wing'd,
> His mounting mind made long abode in heaven.
> This is freethinking, uneonfined to parts,
> To send the soul, on curious travel bent,
> Through all the provinces of human thought:
> To dart her flight through the whole sphere of man;
> Of this vast universe to make the tour;
> In each recess of space and time, at home;
> Familiar with their wonders: diving deep;
> And like a prince of boundless interests there,
> Still most ambitious of the most remote;
> To look on truth unbroken, and entire;
> Truth in the system, the full orb; where truths,
> By truths enlighten'd and sustain'd, afford
> An archlike, strong foundation, to support
> Th' incumbent weight of absolute, complete

> Conviction : here, the more we press, we stand
> More firm ; who most examine, most believe.
> Parts, like half-sentences, confound : the whole
> Conveys the sense, and GOD is understood,
> Who not in fragments writes to human race.
> Read his whole volume, sceptic ! then reply."

Renounce St Evremont ! Ay, and many a Deistical writer of high repute now in the world. But how came they by the truths they did know? Not by the work of their own unassisted faculties—for they lived in a Christian country ; they had already been imbued with many high and holy beliefs, of which—had they willed it—they could never have got rid ; and to the very last the light which they, in their pride, believed to have emanated from the inner shrine—the penetralia of Philosophy—came from the temples of the living God. They walked all their lives long—though they knew it not, or strived to forget it—in the light of revelation, which, though often darkened to men's eyes by clouds from earth, was still shining strong in heaven. Had the New Testament never been—think ye that men in their pride, though

> " Poor sons of a day,"

could have discerned the necessity of framing for themselves a *religion of humility ?* No. As by pride we are told the angels fell—so by pride man, after his miserable fall, strove to lift up his helpless being from the dust ; and though trailing himself, soul and body, along the soiling earth, and glorying in his own corruption, sought to eternise here his very sins by naming the stars of heaven after heroes, conquerors, murderers, violators of the mandates of the Maker whom they had forgotten, or whose attributes they had debased by their own foul imaginations. They believed themselves, in the delusion of their own idolatries, to be " Lords of the world and Demigods of Fame," while they were the slaves of their own sins and their own sinful Deities. Should we have been wiser in our generation than they, but for the Bible ? If in moral speculation we hear but little—too little—of the confession of what it owes to the Christian religion—in all the Philosophy, nevertheless, that is pure and of good report, we *see* that " the dayspring from on high has visited it." In all philosophic inquiry there is, perhaps, a tendency to the soul's exal-

tation of itself—which the spirit and genius of Christianity subdues. It is not sufficient to say that a natural sense of our own infirmities will do so—for seldom indeed have Deists been lowly-minded. They have talked proudly of humility. Compare their moral meditations with those of our great divines. Their thoughts and feelings are of the "earth earthy;" but when we listen to those others, we feel that their lore has been God-given.

"It is as if an angel shook his wings."

Thus has Christianity glorified Philosophy; its celestial purity is now the air in which intellect breathes. In the liberty and equality of that religion, the soul of the highest Philosopher dare not offend that of the humblest peasant. Nay, it sometimes stands rebuked before it—and the lowly dweller in the hut, or the shieling on the mountain-side, or in the forest, could abash the proudest son of Science, by pointing to the Sermon of our Saviour on the Mount—and saying, "I see my duties to man and God *here!*" The religious establishments of Christianity, therefore, have done more not only to support the life of virtue, but to show all its springs and sources, than all the works of all the Philosophers who have ever expounded its principles or its practice.

Ha! what has brought thee hither, thou wide-antlered king of the red-deer of Braemar, from the spacious desert of thy hills of storm? Ere now we have beheld thee, or one stately as thee, gazing abroad, from a rock over the heather, to all the points of heaven, and soon as our figure was seen far below, leading the van of the flight thou went'st haughtily away into the wilderness. But now thou glidest softly and slowly through the gloom—no watchfulness, no anxiety in thy large beaming eyes; and, kneeling among the hoary mosses, layest thyself down in unknown fellowship with one of those human creatures, a glance of whose eye, a murmur of whose voice, would send thee bolting through the forest, terrified by the flash or sound that bespoke a hostile nature wont to pursue thy race unto death.—The hunter is upon thee—away—away! Sudden as a shooting-star up springs the red-deer, and in the gloom as suddenly is lost.

On—on—on! further into the Forest!—and now a noise as of "thunder heard remote." Waterfalls—hundreds of water-

falls sounding for ever—here—there—everywhere—among the remoter woods. Northwards one fierce torrent dashes through the centre—but no villages—only a few woodmen's shielings will appear on its banks; for it is a torrent of precipices, where the shrubs that hang midway from the cleft are out of the reach of the spray of its cataracts, even when the red Garroch is in flood.

Many hours have we been in the wilderness, and our heart yearns again for the cheerful dwellings of men. Sweet infant streamlet, that flows by our feet without a murmur, so shallow are yet thy waters—wilt thou—short as hitherto has been thy journeying—wilt thou be our guide out into the green valleys and the blue heaven, and the sight once more of the bright sunshine and the fair fleecy clouds? No other clue to the labyrinth do we seek but that small, thin, pure, transparent thread of silver, which neither bush nor brier will break, and which will wind without entanglement round the roots of the old trees, and the bases of the shaggy rocks. As if glad to escape from its savage birthplace, the small rivulet now gives utterance to a song; and sliding down shelving rocks, so low in their mossy verdure as hardly to deserve that name, glides along the almost level lawns, here and there disclosing a little hermit flower. No danger now of its being imbibed wholly by the thirsty earth; for it has a channel and banks of its own —and there is a waterfall! Thenceforwards the rivulet never loses its merry voice—and in an hour it is a torrent. What beautiful symptoms now of its approach to the edge of the Forest! Wandering lights and whispering airs are here visitants—and there the blue eye of a wild violet looking up from the ground! The glades are more frequent—more frequent open spaces cleared by the woodman's axe—and the antique Oak-Tree all alone by itself, itself a grove. The torrent may be called noble now; and that deep blue atmosphere—or say rather, that glimmer of purple air—lies over the Strath in which a great River rolls along to the Sea.

Nothing in all nature more beautiful than the boundary of a great Highland Forest. Masses of rocks thrown together in magnificent confusion, many of them lichened and weather-stained with colours gorgeous as the eyed plumage of the peacock, the lustre of the rainbow, or the barred and clouded glories of setting suns—some towering aloft with trees sown

in the crevices by bird or breeze, and checkering the blue sky—others bare, black, abrupt, grim as volcanoes, and shattered as if by the lightning-stroke. Yet interspersed, places of perfect peace—circles among the tall heather, or taller lady-fern, smoothed into velvet, it is there easy to believe, by Fairies' feet—rocks where the undisturbed linnet hangs her nest among the blooming briers, all floating with dew-draperies of honeysuckle alive with bees—glades green as emerald, where lie the lambs in tempered sunshine, or haply a lovely doe reposes with her fawn; and further down, where the fields half belong to the mountain and half to the strath, the smoke of hidden huts—a log-bridge flung across the torrent—a hanging-garden, and a little broomy knoll, with a few laughing children at play, almost as wild-looking as the wanderers of the woods!

Turn your eyes, if you can, from that lovely wilderness, and behold down along a mile-broad Strath, fed by a thousand torrents, floweth the noblest of Scotia's rivers, the strong-sweeping Spey! Let Imagination launch her canoe, and be thou a solitary steersman—for need is none of oar or sail; keep the middle course while all the groves go by, and ere the sun has sunk behind yon golden mountains—nay, mountains they are not, but a transitory pomp of clouds—thou mayest list the roaring, and behold the foaming of the Sea.

Was there ever such a descriptive dream of a coloured engraving of the Cushat, Quest, or Ring-Dove, dreamt before? Poor worn-out and glimmering candle!—whose wick of light and life in a few more flickerings will be no more—what a contrast dost thou present with thyself of eight hours ago! Then, truly, wert thou a shining light, and high aloft in the room-gloaming burned thy clear crest like a star—during its midnight silence, a *memento mori* of which our spirit was not afraid. Now thou art dying—dying—dead! Our cell is in darkness. But methinks we see another—a purer—a clearer light—one more directly from Heaven. We touch but a spring in a wooden shutter—and lo! the full blaze of day. Oh! why should we mortal beings dread that night-prison—the Grave?

DR KITCHINER.

FIRST COURSE.

It greatly grieved us to think that Dr Kitchiner should have died before our numerous avocations had allowed us an opportunity of dining with him, and subjecting to the test-act of our experienced palate his claims to immortality as a Cook and a Christian. The Doctor had, we know, a dread of Us—not altogether unalloyed by delight; and on the dinner to Us, which he had meditated for nearly a quarter of a century, he knew and felt must have hung his reputation with posterity—his posthumous fame. We understand that there is an unfinished sketch of that Dinner among the Doctor's papers, and that the design is magnificent. Yet, perhaps, it is better for his glory that Kitchiner should have died without attempting to embody in forms the Idea of that Dinner. It might have been a failure. How liable to imperfection the *matériel* on which he would have had to work! How defective the instruments! Yes—yes!—happier far was it for the good old man that he should have fallen asleep with the undimmed idea of that unattempted Dinner in his imagination, than, vainly contending with the physical evil inherent in matter, have detected the Bishop's foot in the first course, and died of a broken heart!

"Travelling," it is remarked by our poor dear dead Doctor in his "Traveller's Oracle," "is a recreation to be recommended, especially to those whose employments are sedentary—who are engaged in abstract studies—whose minds have been sunk in a state of morbid melancholy by hypochondriasis, or, by what is worst of all, a lack of domestic felicity. Nature, however, will not suffer any sudden transition; and therefore it is improper for people accustomed to a sedentary life to undertake suddenly a journey, during which they will be

exposed to long and violent jolting. The case here is the same as if one accustomed to drink water should, all at once, begin to drink wine."

Had the Doctor been alive, we should have asked him what he meant by "long and violent jolting?" Jolting is now absolutely unknown in England, and it is of England the Doctor speaks. No doubt, some occasional jolting might still be discovered among the lanes and cross-roads; but, though violent, it could not be long: and we defy the most sedentary gentleman living to be more so, when sitting in an easy-chair by his parlour fireside, than in a cushioned carriage spinning along the turnpike. But for the trees and hedgerows all galloping by, he would never know that he was himself in motion. The truth is, that no gentleman can be said, nowadays, to lead a sedentary life, who is not constantly travelling before the insensible touch of M'Adam. Look at the first twenty people that come towering by on the roof of a Highflier or a Defiance. What can be more sedentary? Only look at that elderly gentleman with the wig, evidently a parson, jammed in between a brace of buxom virgins on their way down to Doncaster races. Could he be more sedentary, during the psalm, in his own pulpit?

We must object, too, to the illustration of wine and water. Let no man who has been so unfortunate as to be accustomed to drink water, be afraid all at once to begin to drink wine. Let him, without fear or trembling, boldly fill bumpers to the Throne—the Navy—and the Army. These three bumpers will have made him a new man. We have no objection whatever to his drinking, in animated succession, the Apotheosis of the Whigs—the Angler's delight—the cause of Liberty all over the World—Christopher North—Maga the Immortal.—"Nature will not suffer any sudden transition!" Will she not? Look at our water-drinker now! His very own mother could not know him—he has lost all resemblance to his twin-brother, from whom, two short hours ago, you could not have distinguished him but for a slight scar on his brow—so completely is his apparent personal identity lost, that it would be impossible for him to establish an *alibi*. He sees a figure in the mirror above the chimney-piece, but has not the slightest suspicion that the rosy-faced Bacchanal is himself, the water-drinker; but then he takes care to imitate the manual exer-

cise of the phantom—lifting his glass to his lips at the very same moment, as if they were both moved by one soul.

The Doctor then wisely remarks, that it is "impossible to lay down any rule by which to regulate the number of miles a man may journey in a day, or to prescribe the precise number of ounces he ought to eat; but that nature has given us a very excellent guide in a sense of lassitude, which is as unerring in exercise as the sense of satiety is in eating."

We say the Doctor wisely remarks, yet not altogether wisely; for the rule does not seem to hold always good either in exercise or in eating. What more common than to feel oneself very much fatigued—quite done up as it were, and unwilling to stir hand or foot. Up goes a lark in heaven—tira-lira—or suddenly the breezes blow among the clouds, who forthwith all begin campaigning in the sky, or, quick as lightning, the sunshine in a moment resuscitates a drowned day—or tripping along, all by her happy self, to the sweet accompaniment of her joy-varied songs, the woodman's daughter passes by on her way, with a basket in her hand, to her father in the forest, who has already laid down his axe on the meridian shadow darkening one side of the straight stem of an oak, beneath whose grove might be drawn up five-score of plumed chivalry! Where is your "sense of lassitude now, nature's unerring guide in exercise?" You spring up from the mossy wayside bank, and renewed both in mind and body, "rejoicing in Nature's joy," you continue to pass over houseless moors, by small, single, solitary, straw-roofed huts, through villages gathered round Stone Cross, Elm Grove, or old Monastic Tower, till, unwearied in lith and limb, you see sunset beautifying all the west, and drop in, perhaps, among the hush of the Cottar's Saturday Night—for it is in sweet Scotland we are walking in our dream—and know not, till we have stretched ourselves on a bed of rushes or of heather, that "kind Nature's sweet restorer balmy sleep," is yet among the number of our bosom friends—alas! daily diminishing beneath fate or fortune, the sweeping scythe-stroke of death, or the whisper of some one poor, puny, idle, and unmeaning word!

Then, as to "the sense of satiety in eating." It is produced in us by three platefuls of hotch-potch—and, to the eyes of an ordinary observer, our dinner would seem to be at

an end. But no—strictly speaking, it is just going to begin. About an hour ago did we, standing on the very beautiful bridge of Perth, see that identical salmon, with his back-fin just visible above the translucent tide, arrowing up the Tay, bold as a bridegroom, and nothing doubting that he should spend his honeymoon among the gravel-beds of Kinnaird or Moulinearn, or the rocky sofas of the Tummel, or the green marble couches of the Tilt. What has become now of "the sense of satiety in eating?" John—the castors!—mustard—vinegar—cayenne—catchup—pease and potatoes, with a very little butter—the biscuit called "rusk"—and the memory of the hotch-potch is as that of Babylon the Great. That any gigot of mutton, exquisite though much of the five-year-old blackfaced must assuredly be, can, with any rational hopes of success, contend against a haunch of venison, will be asserted by no devout lover of truth. Try the two by alternate platefuls, and you will uniformly find that you leave off after the venison. That "sense of satiety in eating," of which Dr Kitchiner speaks, was produced by the Tay salmon devoured above—but of all the transitory feelings of us transitory creatures on our transit through this transitory world, in which the Doctor asserts nature will not suffer any sudden transitions, the most transitory ever experienced by us is "the sense of satiety in eating." Therefore, we have now seen it for a moment existing on the disappearance of the hotch-potch—dying on the appearance of the Tay salmon—once more noticeable as the last plate of the noble fish melted away—extinguished suddenly by the vision of the venison—again felt for an instant, and but for an instant—for a brace and a half of as fine grouse as ever expanded their voluptuous bosoms to be devoured by hungry love! Sense of satiety in eating indeed! If you please, my dear friend, one of the backs—pungent with the most palate-piercing, stomach-stirring, heart-warming, soul-exalting of all tastes—the wild bitter-sweet.

But the Doctor returns to the subject of travelling—and fatigue. "When one begins," he says, "to be low-spirited and dejected, to yawn often and be drowsy, when the appetite is impaired, when the smallest movement occasions a fluttering of the pulse, when the mouth becomes dry, and is sensible of a bitter taste, *seek refreshment and repose*, if you wish to

PREVENT ILLNESS, already beginning to take place." Why, our dear Doctor, illness in such a deplorable case as this, is just about to end, and death is beginning to take place. Thank Heaven, it is a condition to which we do not remember having very nearly approximated! Who ever saw us yawn? or drowsy? or with our appetite impaired, except on the withdrawal of the table-cloth? or low-spirited, but when the Glenlivet was at ebb? Who dare declare that he ever saw our mouth dry? or sensible of a bitter taste, since we gave over munching rowans? Put your finger on our wrist, at any moment you choose, from June to January, from January to June, and by its pulsation you may rectify Harrison's or Kendal's chronometer.

But the Doctor proceeds—"By raising the temperature of my room to about 65°, a broth diet, and taking a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in half a pint of warm water, and repeating it every half-hour till it moves the bowels twice or thrice, and retiring to rest an hour or two sooner than usual, I have often very speedily got rid of colds, &c."

Why, there may be no great harm in acting as above; although we should far rather recommend a screed of the Epsoms. A tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in half a pint of warm water, reminds one, somehow or other, of Tims. A small matter works a Cockney. It is not so easy—and that the Cockneys well know—to move the bowels of old Christopher North. We do not believe that a tea-spoonful of anything in this world would have any serious effect on old "Ironsides." We should have no hesitation in backing him against so much corrosive sublimate. He would dine out on the day he had bolted that quantity of arsenic;—and would, we verily believe, rise triumphant from a tea-spoonful of Prussic acid.

We could mention a thousand cures for "colds, et cetera," more efficacious than a broth diet, a warm room, a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts, or early roosting. What say you, our dear Dean, to half-a-dozen tumblers of hot toddy? Your share of a brown jug to the same amount? Or an equal quantity, in its gradual decrease revealing deeper and deeper still the romantic Welsh scenery of the Devil's Punch-Bowl? *Adde tot* small-bearded oysters, all redolent of the salt-sea foam, and worthy, as they stud the Ambrosial brodd, to be licked off all at once by the lambent tongue of Neptune. That antiquated

calumny against the character of toasted cheese—that, forsooth, it is indigestible—has been trampled under the march of mind; and therefore, you may tuck in a pound of double Gloucester. Other patients, labouring under catarrh, may, very possibly, prefer the roasted how-towdy—or the green goose from his first stubble-field—or why not, by way of a little variety, a roasted maukin, midway between hare and leveret, tempting as maiden between woman and girl, or, as the Eastern poet says, between a frock and a gown? Go to bed—no need of warming-pans—about a quarter before one; —you will not hear that small hour strike—you will sleep sound till sunrise, sound as the Black Stone at Scone, on which the Kings of Scotland were crowned of old. And if you contrive to carry a cold about you next day, you deserve to be sent to Coventry by all sensible people—and may, if you choose, begin taking, with Tims, a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in a half-pint of warm water every half-hour, till it moves your bowels twice or thrice; but if you do, be your sex, politics, or religion what they may, never shall ye be suffered to contribute even a bit of Balaam to the Magazine.

The Doctor then treats of the best Season for travelling, and very judiciously observes that it is during these months when there is no occasion for a fire—that is, just before and after the extreme heat. In winter, Dr Kitchiner, who was a man of extraordinary powers of observation, observed, "that the ways are generally bad, and often dangerous, especially in hilly countries, by reason of the snow and ice. The days are short—a traveller comes late to his lodging, and is often forced to rise before the sun in the morning—besides, the country looks dismal—nature is, as it were, half dead. The summer corrects all these inconveniences." Paradoxical as this doctrine may at first sight appear—yet we have verified it by experience—having for many years found, without meeting with one single exception, that the fine, long, warm days of summer are an agreeable and infallible corrective of the inconveniences attending the foul, short, cold days of winter—a season which is surly without being sincere, blustering rather than bold—an intolerable bore—always pretending to be taking his leave, yet domiciliating himself in another man's house for weeks together—and, to be plain, a season so regardless of truth, that nobody believes him till frost has hung an ice-

padlock on his mouth, and his many-river'd voice is dumb under the wreathed snows.

"Cleanliness when travelling," observes the Doctor, "is doubly necessary; to sponge the body every morning with tepid water, and then rub it dry with a rough towel, will greatly contribute to preserve health. To put the feet into warm water for a couple of minutes just before going to bed, is very refreshing, and inviting to sleep; for promoting tranquillity, both mental and corporeal, a clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear conscience."

Far be it from us to seek to impugn such doctrine. A dirty dog is a nuisance not to be borne. But here the question arises—who—what—is a dirty dog? Now there are men (no women) naturally—necessarily—dirty. They are not dirty by chance—or accident—say twice or thrice per diem; but they are always dirty—at all times and in all places—and never and nowhere more disgustingly so than when figged out for going to church. It is in the skin, in the blood—in the flesh, and in the bone—that with such the disease of dirt more especially lies. We beg pardon—no less in the hair. Now, such persons do not know that they are dirty—that they are unclean beasts. On the contrary, they often think themselves pinks of purity—incarnations of carnations—impersonations of moss-roses—the spiritual essences of lilies, "imparadised in form of that sweet flesh." Now, were such persons to change their linen every half-hour, night and day, that is, were they to put on forty-eight clean shirts in the twenty-four hours—and it might not be reasonable, perhaps, to demand more of them under a government somewhat too Whiggish—yet though we cheerfully grant that one and all of the shirts would be dirty, we as sulkily deny that at any given moment from sunrise to sunset, and over again, the wearer would be clean. He would be just every whit and bit as dirty as if he had known but one single shirt all his life—and firmly believed his to be the only shirt in the universe.

Men again, on the other hand, there are—and, thank God, in great numbers—who are naturally so clean, that we defy you to make them *bonâ fide* dirty. You may as well drive down a duck into a dirty puddle, and expect lasting stains on its pretty plumage. Pope says the same thing of swans—

that is, Poets—when speaking of Aaron Hill diving into the ditch,—

> "He bears no tokens of the sabler streams,
> But soars far off among the swans of Thames."

Pleasant people of this kind of constitution you see going about of a morning rather in dishabille—hair uncombed haply—face and hands even unwashed—and shirt with a somewhat day-before-yesterdayish hue. Yet are they, so far from being dirty, at once felt, seen, and smelt, to be among the very cleanest of her Majesty's subjects. The moment you shake hands with them, you feel in the firm flesh of palm and finger that their heart's-blood circulates purely and freely from the point of the highest hair on the apex of the pericranium, to the edge of the nail on the large toe of the right foot. Their eyes are as clear as unclouded skies—the apples on their cheeks are like those on the tree—what need, in either case, of rubbing off dust or dew with a towel? What though, from sleeping without a nightcap, their hair may be a little toozy? It is not dim—dull—oily—like half-withered sea-weeds! It will soon comb itself with the fingers of the west wind—that tent-like tree its toilette—its mirror that pool of the clear-flowing Tweed.

Some streams, just like some men, are always dirty—you cannot possibly tell why—unproducible to good pic-nic society either in dry or wet weather. In dry, the oozy wretches are weeping among the slippery weeds, infested with eels and powheads. In wet, they are like so many common-sewers, strewn with dead cats and broken crockery, and threatening with their fierce fulzie to pollute the sea. The sweet, soft, pure rains, soon as they touch the flood are changed into filth. The sun sees his face in one of the pools, and is terrified out of his senses. He shines no more that day. The clouds have no notion of being caricatured, and the trees keep cautiously away from the brink of such streams—save, perchance, now and then, here and there, a weak well-meaning willow—a thing of shreds and patches—its leafless wands covered with bits of old worsted stockings, crowns of hats, a bauchle (see Dr Jamieson), and the remains of a pair of corduroy breeches, long hereditary in the family of the Blood-Royal of the Yetholm Gypsies.

Some streams, just like some men, are always clean—you cannot well tell why—producible to good pic-nic society either in dry or wet weather. In dry, the pearly waters are singing among the freshened flowers—so that the trout, if he chooses, may breakfast upon bees. In wet, they grow, it is true, dark and drumly—and at midnight, when heaven's candles are put out, loud and oft the angry spirit of the water shrieks. But Aurora beholds her face in the clarified pools and shallows—far and wide glittering with silver or with gold. All the banks and braes reappear green as emerald from the subsiding current—into which look with the eye of an angler, and you behold a Fish—a twenty-pounder—steadying himself—like an uncertain shadow; and oh! for George Scougal's leister to strike him through the spine! Yes, these are the images of trees far down, as if in another world; and, whether you look up or look down, alike in all its blue, braided, and unbounded beauty, is the morning sky!

Irishmen are generally men of the kind thus illustrated—generally sweet—at least in their own green Isle; and that was the best argument in favour of Catholic Emancipation.—So are Scotsmen. Whereas, blindfolded, take a London, Edinburgh, or Glasgow Cockney's hand, immediately after it has been washed and scented, and put it to your nose—and you will begin to be apprehensive that some practical wit has substituted in lieu of the sonnet-scribbling bunch of little fetid fives, the body of some chicken-butcher of a weasel, that died of the plague. We have seen as much of what is most ignorantly and malignantly denominated dirt—one week's earth—washed off the feet of a pretty young girl on a Saturday night, at a single sitting in the little rivulet that runs almost round about her father's hut, as would have served him to raise his mignonette in, or his crop of cresses. How beautifully glowed the crimson-snow of the singing creature's new-washed feet! First, as they shone almost motionless beneath the lucid waters—and then, fearless of the hard bent and rough roots of the heather, bore the almost alarming Fairy dancing away from the eyes of the stranger; till the courteous spirit that reigns over all the Highland wilds arrested her steps knee-deep in bloom, and bade her bow her auburn head, as, blushing, she faltered forth, in her sweet Gaelic accents, a welcome that thrilled like a blessing through the heart of the Sassenach,

nearly benighted, and wearied sore with the fifty glorious mountain-miles that intermit at times their frowning forests from the correis of Cruachan to the cliffs of Cairngorm.

It will be seen from these hurried remarks, that there is more truth than perhaps Dr Kitchiner was aware of in his apothegm—"that a clean skin may be regarded as next in efficacy to a clear conscience." But the Doctor had but a very imperfect notion of the meaning of the words "clean skin"—his observation being not even skin-deep. A wash-hand basin, a bit of soap, and a coarse towel, he thought would give a Cockney on Ludgate-hill a clean skin—just as many good people think that a Bible, a prayer-book, and a long sermon, can give a clear conscience to a criminal in Newgate. The cause of the evil, in both cases, lies too deep for tears. Millions of men and women pass through nature to eternity clean-skinned and pious—with slight expense either in soap or sermons; while millions more, with much week-day bodily scrubbing, and much Sabbath spiritual sanctification, are held in bad odour here, while they live, by those who happen to sit near them, and finally go out like the stink of a candle.

Never stir, quoth the Doctor, "without paper, pen, and ink, and a note-book in your pocket. Notes made by pencils are easily obliterated by the motion of travelling. Commit to paper whatever you see, hear, or read, that is remarkable, with your sensations on observing it—do this upon the spot, if possible, at the moment it first strikes you—at all events do not delay it beyond the first convenient opportunity."

Suppose all people behaved in this way—and what an absurd world we should have of it—every man, woman, and child who could write, jotting away at their note-books! This committing to paper of whatever you see, hear, or read, has, among many other bad effects, this one especially—in a few years it reduces you to a state of idiocy. The memory of all men who commit to paper becomes regularly extinct, we have observed, about the age of thirty. Now, although the Memory does not bear a very brilliant reputation among the faculties, a man finds himself very much at a stand who is unprovided with one; for the Imagination, the Judgment, and the Reason walk off in search of the Memory—each in opposite directions; and the Mind, left at home by itself, is in a very awkward

predicament — gets comatose—snores loudly, and expires. For our own part, we would much rather lose our Imagination and our Judgment—nay, our very Reason itself—than our Memory—provided we were suffered to retain a little Feeling and a little Fancy. Committers to paper forget that the Memory is a tablet, or they carelessly fling that mysterious tablet away, soft as wax to receive impressions, and harder than adamant to retain, and put their trust in a bit of calf-skin, or a bundle of old rags.

The observer who instantly jots down every object he sees, never, properly speaking, saw an object in his life. There has always been in the creature's mind a feeling alien to that which the object would, of its pure self, have excited. The very preservation of a sort of style in the creature's remarks, costs him an effort which disables him from understanding what is before him, by dividing the small attention of which he might have been capable, between the jotting, the jotter, and the thing jotted. Then your committer to paper of whatever he sees, hears, or reads, forgets or has never known that all real knowledge, either of men or things, must be gathered up by operations which are in their very being spontaneous and free—the mind being even unconscious of them as they are going on—while the edifice has all the time been silently rising up under the unintermitting labours of those silent workers—Thoughts; and is finally seen, not without wonder, by the Mind or Soul itself, which, gentle reader, was all along Architect and Foreman—had not only originally planned, but had even daily superintended the building of the Temple.

Were Dr Kitchiner not dead, we should just put to him this simple question—Could you, Doctor, not recollect all the dishes of the most various dinner at which you ever assisted, down to the obscurest kidney, without committing every item to your note-book? Yes, Doctor, you could. Well, then, all the universe is but one great dinner. Heaven and earth, what a show of dishes! From a sun to a salad—a moon to a mutton chop—a comet to a curry—a planet to a pâté! What gross ingratitude to the Giver of the feast, not to be able, with the memory he has given us, to remember his bounties! It is true, what the Doctor says, that notes made with pencils are easily obliterated by the motion of travelling; but then,

Doctor, notes made by the Mind herself, with the Ruby Pen Nature gives all her children who have also discourse of Reason, are with the slightest touch, easilier far than glass by the diamond, traced on the tablets that disease alone seems to deface, death alone to break, but which, ineffaceable, and not to be broken, shall with all their miscellaneous inscriptions endure for ever—yea, even to the great Day of Judgment.

If men will but look and listen, and feel and think—they will never forget anything worth being remembered. Do we forget "our children, that to our eyes are dearer than the sun?" Do we forget our wives—unreasonable and almost downright disagreeable as they sometimes will be? Do we forget our triumphs—our defeats—our ecstasies, our agonies—the face of a dear friend, or "dearest foe"—the ghost-like voice of conscience at midnight arraigning us of crimes—or her seraph hymn, at which the gates of heaven seem to expand for us that we may enter in among the white-robed spirits, and

"Summer high in bliss upon the hills of God?"

What are all the jottings that ever were jotted down on his jot-book, by the most inveterate jotter that ever reached a raven age, in comparison with the Library of Useful Knowledge, that every man—who is a man—carries within the Ratcliffe—the Bodleian of his own breast?

What are you grinning at in the corner there, you little ugly Beelzebub of a Printer's Devil? and have you dropped through a seam in the ceiling? More copy do you want? There, you imp—vanished like a thought!

DR KITCHINER.

SECOND COURSE.

Above all things, continues Dr Kitchiner, "avoid travelling through the night, which, by interrupting sleep, and exposing the body to the night air, is always prejudicial, even in the mildest weather, and to the strongest constitutions." Pray, Doctor, what ails you at the night air? If the night air be, even in the mildest weather, prejudicial to the strongest constitutions, what do you think becomes of the cattle on a thousand hills? Why don't all the bulls in Bashan die of the asthma—or look interesting by moonlight in a galloping consumption? Nay, if the night air be so very fatal, how do you account for the longevity of owls? Have you never read of the Chaldean shepherds watching the courses of the stars? Or, to come nearer our own times, do you not know that every blessed night throughout the year, thousands of young lads and lasses meet, either beneath the milk-white thorn—or on the lea-rig, although the night be ne'er sae wet, and they be ne'er sae weary—or under a rock on the hill—or—no uncommon case—beneath a frozen stack—not of chimneys, but of corn-sheaves—or on a couch of snow—and that they are all as warm as so many pies; while, instead of feeling what you call "the lack of vigour attendant on the loss of sleep, which is as enfeebling and as distressing as the languor that attends the want of food," they are, to use a homely Scotch expression, "neither to haud nor bind;" the eyes of the young lads being all as brisk, bold, and bright as the stars in Charles's Wain, while those of the young lasses shine with a soft, faint, obscure, but beautiful lustre, like the dewy Pleiades, over which nature has insensibly been breathing a mist almost waving and wavering into a veil of clouds?

Have you, our dear Doctor, no compassion for those unfor-

tunate blades, who, *nolentes-volentes*, must remain out perennially all night—we mean the blades of grass, and also the flowers? Their constitutions seem often far from strong; and shut your eyes on a frosty night, and you will hear them—we have done so many million times—shivering, ay, absolutely shivering under their coat of hoar-frost! If the night air be indeed what Dr Kitchiner has declared it to be—Lord have mercy on the vegetable world! What agonies in that field of turnips! Alas, poor Swedes! The imagination recoils from the condition of that club of winter cabbages—and of what materials, pray, must the heart of that man be made, who could think but for a moment on the case of those carrots, without bursting into a flood of tears!

The Doctor avers that the firm health and fine spirits of persons who live in the country, are not more from breathing a purer air, than from enjoying plenty of sound sleep; and the most distressing misery of "this Elysium of bricks and mortar," is the rareness with which we enjoy "the sweets of a slumber unbroke."

Doctor—in the first place, it is somewhat doubtful whether or not persons who live in the country have firmer health and finer spirits than persons who live in towns—even in London. What kind of persons do you mean? You must not be allowed to select some dozen or two of the hairiest among the curates—a few chosen rectors whose faces have been but lately elevated to the purple—a team of prebends issuing sleek from their golden stalls—a picked bishop—a sacred band the élite of the squirearchy—with a corresponding sprinkling of superior noblemen from lords to dukes—and then to compare them, cheek by jowl, with an equal number of external objects taken from the common run of Cockneys. This, Doctor, is manifestly what you are ettling at—but you must clap your hand, Doctor, without discrimination, on the great body of the rural population of England, male and female, and take whatever comes first—be it a poor, wrinkled, toothless, blear-eyed, palsied hag, tottering horizontally on a staff, under the load of a premature old age (for she is not yet fifty), brought on by annual rheumatism and perennial poverty;—Be it a young, ugly, unmarried woman, far advanced in pregnancy, and sullenly trooping to the alehouse, to meet the overseer of the parish poor, who, enraged with the unborn

bastard, is about to force the parish bully to marry the parish prostitute ;—Be it a landlord of a rural inn, with pig eyes peering over his ruby cheeks, the whole machinery of his mouth so deranged by tippling that he simultaneously snorts, stutters, slavers and snores—pot-bellied—shanked like a spindle-strae—and bidding fair to be buried on or before Saturday week ;—Be it a half-drunk horse-cowper, swinging to and fro in a wraprascal on a bit of broken-down blood that once won a fifty, every sentence, however short, having but two intelligible words, an oath and a lie—his heart rotten with falsehood, and his bowels burned up with brandy, so that sudden death may pull him from his saddle before he put spurs to his sporting filly that she may bilk the turnpike man, and carry him more speedily home to beat or murder his poor, pale, industrious char-woman of a wife ;—Be it—not a beggar, for beggars are prohibited from this parish—but a pauper in the sulks, dying on her pittance from the poor-rates, which altogether amount in merry England but to about the paltry sum of, more or less, six millions a-year—her son, all the while, being in a thriving way as a general merchant in the capital of the parish, and with clear profits from his business of £300 per annum, yet suffering the mother that bore him, and suckled him, and washed his childish hands, and combed the bumpkin's hair, and gave him Epsoms in a cup when her dear Johnny-raw had the belly-ache, to go down, step by step, as surely and as obviously as one is seen going down a stair with a feeble hold of the banisters, and stumbling every foot-fall down that other flight of steps that consist of flags that are mortal damp and mortal cold, and lead to nothing but a parcel of rotten planks, and overhead a vault dripping with perpetual moisture, green and slobbery, such as toads delight in crawling heavily through with now and then a bloated leap, and hideous things more worm-like, that go wriggling briskly in and out among the refuse of the coffins, and are heard, by imagination at least, to emit faint angry sounds, because the light of day has hurt their eyes, and the air from the upper world weakened the rank savoury smell of corruption, clothing, as with a pall, all the inside walls of the tombs ; —Be it a man yet in the prime of life as to years, six feet and an inch high, and measuring round the chest forty-eight inches (which is more, reader, than thou dost by six, we bet

a sovereign, member although thou even be'st of the Edinburgh Six Feet Club), to whom Washington Irving's Jack Tibbuts was but a Tims—but then ever so many gamekeepers met him all alone in my lord's pheasant preserve, and though two of them died within the month, two within the year, and two are now in the workhouse—one a mere idiot, and the other a madman—both shadows—so terribly were their bodies mauled, and so sorely were their skulls fractured;—yet the poacher was taken, tried, hulked; and there he sits now, sunning himself on a bank by the edge of the wood whose haunts he must thread no more—for the keepers were grim bone-breakers enough in their way—and when they had gotten him on his back, one gouged him like a Yankee, and the other bit off his nose like a Bolton Trotter—and one smashed his *os frontis* with the nailed heel of a two-pound wooden clog, a Preston Purrer;—so that Master Allonby is now far from being a beauty, with a face of that description attached to a head wagging from side to side under a powerful palsy, while the Mandarin drinks damnation to the Lord of the Manor in a horn of eleemosynary ale, handed to him by the village blacksmith, in days of old not the worst of the gang, and who, but for a stupid jury, a merciful judge, and something like prevarication in the circumstantial evidence, would have been hanged for a murderer—as he was—dissected, and hung in chains;—Be it a red-haired woman, with a pug nose, small fiery eyes, high cheekbones, bulging lips, and teeth like swine-tusks,—bearded—flat-breasted as a man—tall, scambling in her gait, but swift, and full of wild motions in her weather-withered arms, all starting with sinews like whipcord—the Pedestrian Post to and fro the market town twelve miles off—and so powerful a pugilist that she hit Grace Maddox senseless in seven minutes—tried before she was eighteen for child-murder, but not hanged, although the man-child, of which the drab was self-delivered in a ditch, was found with blue finger-marks on its windpipe, bloody mouth, and eyes forced out of their sockets, buried in the dunghill behind her father's hut—not hanged, because a surgeon, originally bred a sow-gelder, swore that he believed the mother had unconsciously destroyed her offspring in the throes of travail, if indeed it had ever breathed, for the lungs would not swim, he swore, in a basin of water—so the incestuous murderess was

let loose; her brother got hanged in due time after the mutiny at the Nore—and her father, the fishmonger—why, he went red raving mad as if a dog had bitten him—and died, as the same surgeon and sow-gelder averred, of the hydrophobia, foaming at the mouth, gnashing his teeth, and some said cursing, but that was a calumny, for something seemed to be the matter with his tongue, and he could not speak, only splutter—nobody venturing, except his amiable daughter—and in that particular act of filial affection she was amiable—to hold in the article of death the old man's head;—Be it that moping idiot that would sit, were she suffered, on, on, on—night and day for ever, on the self-same spot, whatever that spot might be on which she happened to squat at morning, mound, wall, or stone—motionless, dumb, and, as a stranger would think, also blind, for the eyelids are still shut—never opened in sun or storm;—yet that figure—that which is now, and has for years been, an utter and hopeless idiot, was once a gay, laughing, dancing, singing girl, whose blue eyes seemed full of light, whether they looked on earth or heaven, the flowers or the stars—her sweetheart—a rational young man, it would appear—having leapt out upon her suddenly, as she was passing through the churchyard at night, from behind a tombstone, in a sack which she, having little time for consideration, and being naturally superstitious, supposed to be a shroud, and the wearer thereof, who was an active stripling of sound flesh and blood, to be a ghost or skeleton, all one horrid rattle of bones; so that the trick succeeded far beyond the most sanguine expectation of the Tailor who played the principal part—and sense, feeling, memory, imagination, and reason, were all felled by one blow of fear—as butcher felleth ox—while by one of those mysteries, which neither we, nor you, nor anybody else, can understand, life remained not only unimpaired, but even invigorated; and there she sits, like a clock wound up to go a certain time, the machinery of which being good, has not been altogether deranged by the shock that sorely cracked the case, and will work till the chain is run down, and then it will tick no more;—Be it that tall, fair, lovely girl, so thin and attenuated that all wonder she can walk by herself—that she is not blown away even by the gentle summer breeze that wooes the hectic of her cheek—dying all see—and none better than her poor old

mother—and yet herself thoughtless of the coming doom, and cheerful as a nest-building bird—while her lover, too deep in despair to be betrayed into tears, as he carries her to her couch, each successive day feels the dear and dreadful burden lighter and lighter in his arms. Small strength will it need to support her bier! The coffin, as if empty, will be lowered unfelt by the hands that hold those rueful cords!

In mercy to our readers and ourselves, we shall endeavour to prevent ourselves from pursuing this argument any further—and perhaps quite enough has been said to show that Dr Kitchiner's assertion, that persons who live in the country have firmer health and finer spirits than the inhabitants of towns—is exceedingly problematical. But even admitting the fact to be as the Doctor has stated it, we do not think he has attributed the phenomenon to the right cause. He attributes it to "their enjoying plenty of sound sleep." The worthy Doctor is entirely out in his conjecture. The working classes in the country enjoy, we don't doubt it, sound sleep—but not plenty of it. They have but a short allowance of sleep—and whether it be sound or not, depends chiefly on themselves; while as to the noises in towns and cities, they are nothing to what one hears in the country—unless, indeed, you perversely prefer private lodgings at a pewterer's. Did we wish to be personal, we could name a single waterfall who, even in dry weather, keeps all the visitors from town awake within a circle of four miles diameter; and in wet weather, not only keeps them all awake, but impresses them with a constantly recurring conviction during the hours of night, that there is something seriously amiss about the foundation of the river, and that the whole parish is about to be overflowed, up to the battlements of the old castle that overlooks the linn. Then, on another point, we are certain—namely, that rural thunder is many hundred times more powerful than villatic. London porter is above admiration—but London thunder below contempt. An ordinary hackney-coach beats it hollow. But, my faith! a thunderstorm in the country—especially if it be mountainous, with a few fine Woods and Forests, makes you inevitably think of that land from whose bourne no traveller returns; and even our town readers will acknowledge that country thunder much more frequently proves mortal than the thunder you meet with in

cities. In the country, few thunderstorms are contented to pass over without killing at least one horse, some milch-kine, half-a-dozen sucking pigs or turkeys, an old woman or two, perhaps the Minister of the parish, a man about forty, name unknown, and a nursing mother at the ingle, the child escaping with singed eyebrows, and a singular black mark on one of its great toes. We say nothing of the numbers stupified, who awake the day after, as from a dream, with strange pains in their heads, and not altogether sure about the names or countenances of the somewhat unaccountable people whom they see variously employed about the premises, and making themselves pretty much at home. In towns, not one thunderstorm in fifty that performs an exploit more magnanimous than knocking down an old wife from a chimney-top—singeing a pair of worsted stockings that, knit in an ill-starred hour, when the sun had entered Aries, had been hung out to dry on a line in the backyard, or garden as it is called—or cutting a few inches off the tail of an old Whig weathercock that for years had been pecking the eyes out of all the airts the wind can blaw, greedy of some still higher preferment.

Our dear deceased author proceeds to tell his Traveller how to eat and drink; and remarks, "that people are apt to imagine that they may indulge a little more in high living when on a journey. Travelling itself, however, acts as a stimulus; therefore less nourishment is required than in a state of rest. What you might not consider intemperate at home, may occasion violent irritation, fatal inflammations, &c., in situations where you are least able to obtain medical assistance."

All this is very loosely stated, and must be set to rights. If you shut yourself up for some fifty hours or so in a mail-coach, that keeps wheeling along at the rate of ten miles an hour, and changes horses in half a minute, certainly for obvious reasons the less you eat and drink the better; and perhaps an hourly hundred drops of laudanum, or equivalent grain of opium, would be advisable, so that the transit from London to Edinburgh might be performed in a phantasma. But the free agent ought to live well on his travels—some degrees better, without doubt, than when at home. People seldom live very well at home. There is always something requiring to be eaten up, that it may not be lost, which

destroys the soothing and satisfactory symmetry of an unexceptionable dinner. We have detected the same duck through many unprincipled disguises, playing a different part in the farce of domestic economy, with a versatility hardly to have been expected in one of the most generally despised of the web-footed tribe. When travelling at one's own sweet will, one feeds at a different inn every meal; and, except when the coincidence of circumstances is against you, there is an agreeable variety both in the natural and artificial disposition of the dishes. True that travelling may act as a stimulus—but false that therefore less nourishment is required. Would Dr Kitchiner, if now alive, presume to say that it was right for him, who had sat all day with his feet on the fender, to gobble up, at six o'clock of the afternoon, as enormous a dinner as we who had walked since sunrise forty or fifty miles? Because our stimulus had been greater, was our nourishment to be less? We don't care a curse about stimulus. What we want, in such a case, is lots of fresh food; and we hold that, under such circumstances, a man with a sound Tory Church-and-King stomach and constitution cannot over-eat himself—no, not for his immortal soul.

We had almost forgot to take the deceased Doctor to task for one of the most free-and-easy suggestions ever made to the ill-disposed, how to disturb and destroy the domestic happiness of eminent literary characters. "An introduction to eminent authors may be obtained," quoth he slyly, "from the booksellers who publish their works."

The booksellers who publish the works of eminent authors have rather more common sense and feeling, it is to be hoped, than this comes to—and know better what is the province of their profession. Any one man may, if he chooses, give any other man an introduction to any third man in this world. Thus the tailor of any eminent author—or his bookseller—or his parish minister—or his butcher—or his baker—or his "man of business"—or his house-builder—may, one and all, give such travellers as Dr Kitchiner and others, letters of introduction to the said eminent author in prose or verse. This, we have heard, is sometimes done—but fortunately we cannot speak from experience, not being ourselves an eminent author. The more general the intercourse between men of taste, feeling, cultivation, learning, genius, the better; but

that intercourse should be brought about freely and of its own accord, as fortunate circumstances permit, and there should be no impertinent interference of selfish or benevolent go-betweens. It would seem that Dr Kitchiner thought the commonest traveller, one who was almost, as it were, bordering on a Bagman, had nothing to do but call on the publisher of any great writer, and get a free admission into his house. Had the Doctor not been dead, we should have given him a severe rowing and blowing-up for this vulgar folly; but as he is dead, we have only to hope that the readers of the Oracle who intend to travel will not degrade themselves, and disgust "authors of eminence," by thrusting their ugly or comely faces—both are equally odious—into the privacy of gentlemen who have done nothing to exclude themselves from the protection of the laws of civilised society — or subject their firesides to be infested by one-half of the curious men of the country, two-thirds of the clever, and all the blockheads.

DR KITCHINER.

THIRD COURSE.

Having thus briefly instructed travellers how to get a look at Lions, the Doctor suddenly exclaims—"Imprimis, beware of dogs!" "There have," he says, "been many arguments, *pro* and *con*, on the dreadful disease their bite produces—it is enough to prove that multitudes of men, women, and children have died in consequence of having been bitten by dogs. What does it matter whether they were the victims of bodily disease or mental irritation? The life of the most humble human being is of more value than all the dogs in the world—dare the most brutal cynic say otherwise?"

Dr Kitchiner always travelled, it appears, in chaises; and a chaise of one kind or other he recommends to all his brethren of mankind. Why, then, this intense fear of the canine species? Who ever saw a mad dog leap into the mail-coach, or even a gig? The creature, when so afflicted, hangs his head, and goes snapping right and left at pedestrians. Poor people like us, who must walk, may well fear hydrophobia—though, thank Heaven, we have never, during the course of a tolerably long and well-spent life, been so much as once bitten by "the rabid animal!" But what have rich authors, who loll in carriages, to dread from dogs, who always go on foot? We cannot credit the very sweeping assertion, that multitudes of men, women, and children have died in consequence of being bitten by dogs. Even the newspapers do not run up the amount above a dozen per annum, from which you may safely deduct two-thirds. Now, four men, women, and children, are not "a multitude." Of those four, we may set down two as problematical—having died, it is true, *in*, but not *of* hydrophobia—states of mind and body wide as the poles asunder. He who drinks two bottles of pure

spirit every day he buttons and unbuttons his breeches, generally dies *in* a state of hydrophobia—for he abhorred water, and knew instinctively the jug containing that insipid element. But he never dies at all *of* hydrophobia, there being evidence to prove that for twenty years he had drank nothing but brandy. Suppose we are driven to confess the other two—why, one of them was an old woman of eighty, who was dying as fast as she could hobble, at the very time she thought herself bitten—and the other a nine-year-old brat, in hooping-cough and measles, who, had there not been such a quadruped as a dog created, would have worried itself to death before evening, so lamentably had its education been neglected, and so dangerous an accomplishment is an impish temper. The twelve cases for the year of that most horrible disease, hydrophobia, have, we flatter ourselves, been satisfactorily disposed of—eight of the alleged deceased being at this moment engaged at various handicrafts, on low wages indeed, but still such as enable the industrious to live—two having died of drinking—one of extreme old age, and one of a complication of complaints incident to childhood, their violence having, in this particular instance, been aggravated by neglect and devilish temper. Where now the "multitude" of men, women, and children, who have died in consequence of being bitten by mad dogs?

Gentle reader—a mad dog is a bugbear; we have walked many hundred times the diameter and the circumference of this our habitable globe—along all roads, public and private—with stiles or turnpikes—metropolitan streets and suburban paths—and at all seasons of the revolving year and day; but never, as we padded the hoof along, met we nor were overtaken by greyhound, mastiff, or cur, in a state of hydrophobia. We have many million times seen them with their tongues lolling out about a yard—their sides panting—flag struck—and the whole dog showing symptoms of severe distress. That such travellers were not mad we do not assert—they may have been mad—but they certainly were fatigued; and the difference, we hope, is often considerable between weariness and insanity. Dr Kitchiner, had he seen such dogs as we have seen, would have fainted on the spot. He would have raised the country against the harmless jog-trotter. Pitchforks would have gleamed in the setting sun, and the

flower of the agricultural youth of a midland county, forming a levy *en masse*, would have offered battle to a turnspit. The Doctor, sitting in his coach—like Napoleon at Waterloo—would have cried "*Tout est perdu—sauve qui peut!*"—and re-galloping to a provincial town, would have found refuge under the gateway of the Hen and Chickens.

"The life of the most humble human being," quoth the Doctor, "is of more value than all the dogs in the world—dare the most brutal cynic say otherwise?"

This question is not put to us; for so far from being the most brutal Cynic, we do not belong to the Cynic school at all—being an Eclectic, and our philosophy composed chiefly of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Peripateticism—with a fine, pure, clear, bold dash of Platonicism. The most brutal Cynic, if now alive and snarling, must therefore answer for himself—while we tell the Doctor, that so far from holding, with him, that the life of the most humble human being is of more value than all the dogs in the world, we, on the contrary, verily believe that there is many a humble dog whose life far transcends in value the lives of many men, women, and children. Whether or not dogs have souls, is a question in philosophy never yet solved; although we have ourselves no doubt on the subject, and firmly believe that they have souls. But the question, as put by the Doctor, is not about souls, but about lives; and as the human soul does not die when the human body does, the death of an old woman, middle-aged man, or young child, is no such very great calamity, either to themselves or to the world. Better, perhaps, that all the dogs now alive should be massacred, to prevent hydrophobia, than that a human soul should be lost;—but not a single human soul is going to be lost, although the whole canine species should become insane to-morrow. Now, would the Doctor have laid one hand on his heart and the other on his Bible, and taken a solemn oath that rather than that one old woman of a century and a quarter should suddenly be cut off by the bite of a mad dog, he would have signed the warrant of execution of all the packs of harriers and fox-hounds, all the pointers, spaniels, setters, and cockers, all the stag-hounds, greyhounds, and lurchers, all the Newfoundlanders, shepherd-dogs, mastiffs, bull-dogs, and terriers, the infinite generation of mongrels and crosses included, in Great

Britain and Ireland—to say nothing of the sledge-drawers in Kamtschatka, and in the realms slow-moving near the Pole? To clench the argument at once—What are all the old women in Europe, one-half of the men, and one-third of the children, when compared, in value, with any one of Christopher North's Newfoundland dogs—Fro—Bronte—or O'Bronte? Finally, does he include in his sweeping condemnation the whole brute creation, lions, tigers, panthers, ounces, elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotami, camelopardales, zebras, quaggas, cattle, horses, asses, mules, cats, the ichneumon, cranes, storks, cocks-of-the-wood, geese, and how-towdies?

"Semi-drowning in the sea"—he continues—"and all the pretended specifics, are mere delusions—there is no real remedy but cutting the part out immediately. If the bite be near a blood-vessel, that cannot always be done, nor when done, however well done, will it always prevent the miserable victim from dying the most dreadful of deaths. Well might St Paul tell us to '*beware of dogs.*' First Epistle to Philippians, chap. iii., v. 2."

Semi-drowning in the sea is, we grant, a bad specific, and difficult to be administered. It is not possible to tell, *a priori*, how much drowning any particular patient can bear. What is mere semi-drowning to James, is total drowning to John; —Tom is easy of resuscitation—Bob will not stir a muscle for all the Humane Societies in the United Kingdoms. To cut a pound of flesh from the rump of a fat dowager, who turns sixteen stone, is within the practical skill of the veriest bungler in the anatomy of the human frame—to scarify the fleshless spindle-shank of an antiquated spinstress, who lives on a small annuity, might be beyond the scalpel of an Abernethy or a Liston. A large blood-vessel, as the Doctor well remarks, is an awkward neighbour to the wound made by the bite of a mad dog, "when a new excision has to be attempted"—but will any Doctor living inform us how, in a thousand other cases besides hydrophobia, "the miserable victim may always be prevented from dying?" There are, probably, more dogs in Britain than horses; yet a hundred men, women, and children are killed by kicks of sane horses, for one by bites of insane dogs. Is the British army, therefore, to be deprived of its left arm, the cavalry? Is there to be no flying artillery? What is to become of the horse-marines?

Still the Doctor, though too dogmatical, and rather puppyish above, is, at times, sensible on dogs.

"Therefore," quoth he, "never travel without a good tough Black Thorn in your Fist, not less than three feet in length, on which may be marked the Inches, and so it may serve for a measure.

"Pampered Dogs, that are permitted to prance about as they please, when they hear a knock, scamper to the door, and not seldom snap at unwary visitors. Whenever *Counsellor Cautious* went to a house, &c., where he was not quite certain that there was no Dog, after he had rapped at the door, he retired three or four yards from it, and prepared against the Enemy: when the door was opened, he desired, if there was any Dog, that it might be shut up till he was gone, and would not enter the House till it was.

"*Sword* and *Tuck Sticks*, as commonly made, are hardly so good a weapon as a stout Stick—the Blades are often inserted into the Handles in such a slight manner, that one smart blow will break them out;—if you wish for a *Sword-Cane*, you must have one made with a good Regulation Blade, which alone will cost more than is usually charged for the entire Stick.—I have seen a Cane made by Mr Price, *of the Stick and Umbrella Warehouse*, 221, *in the Strand*, near Temple Bar, which was excellently put together.

"A powerful weapon, and a very smart and light-looking thing, is *an Iron Stick* of about four-tenths of an inch in diameter, with a Hook next the Hand, and terminating at the other end in a Spike about five inches in length, which is covered by a Ferrule, the whole painted the colour of a common walking-stick; it has a light natty appearance, while it is in fact a most formidable Instrument."

We cannot charge our memory with this instrument, yet had we seen one once, we hardly think we could have forgot it. But Colonel de Berenger in his *Helps and Hints* prefers the umbrella. Umbrellas are usually carried, we believe, in wet weather, and dogs run mad, if ever, in dry. So the safe plan is to carry one all the year through, like the Duke.

"I found it a valuable weapon, although by mere chance; for, walking alone in the rain, a large mad dog, pursued by men, suddenly turned upon me, out of a street which I had just approached; by instinct more than judgment, I gave

point at him severely, opened as the umbrella was, which, screening me at the same time, *was an article from which he did not expect thrusts;* but which, although made at guess, for I could not see him, turned him over and over, and before he could recover himself, his pursuers had come up immediately to despatch him; the whole being the work of even few seconds; but for the umbrella the horrors of hydrophobia might have fallen to my lot."

There is another mode, which, with the omission or alteration of a word or two, looks feasible, supposing we had to deal not with a bull-dog, but a young lady of our own species. "If," says the Colonel, "you can seize a dog's front paw neatly, and immediately squeeze it sharply, he cannot bite you till you cease to squeeze it; therefore, by keeping him thus well pinched, you may lead him wherever you like; or you may, with the other hand, seize him by the skin of the neck, to hold him thus without danger, provided your strength is equal to his efforts at extrication." But here comes the Colonel's infallible *vade-mecum.*

"Look at them with your face from between your opened legs, holding the skirts away, and running at them thus backwards, of course head below, stern exposed, and above all growling angrily; most dogs, seeing so strange an animal, the head at the heels, the eyes below the mouth, &c., are so dismayed, that, with their tails between their legs, they are glad to scamper away, some even howling with affright. I have never tried it with a thorough-bred bull-dog, nor do I advise it with them; though I have practised it, and successfully, with most of the other kinds; it might fail with these, still I cannot say it will."

Thus armed against the canine species, the Traveller, according to our Oracle, must also provide himself with a portable case of instruments for drawing—a sketch and note-book—paper—ink—and PINS—NEEDLES—AND THREAD! A ruby or Rhodium pen, made by Doughty, No. 10, Great Ormond Street—pencils from Langdon's of Great Russell Street—a folding one-foot rule, divided into eighths, tenths, and twelfths of inches—a hunting-watch with seconds, with a detached lever or Dupleix escapement, in good strong silver cases—a Dollond's achromatic opera-glass—a night-lamp—a tinder-box—two pair of spectacles, with strong silver

frames—an eye-glass in a silver ring slung round the neck—a traveller's knife, containing a large and a small blade, a saw, hook for taking a stone out of a horse's shoe, turnscrew, gun-picker, tweezers, and long corkscrew—galoches or paraloses—your own knife and fork, and spoon—a Welsh wig—a spare hat—umbrella—two great-coats, one for cool and fair weather (*i. e.* between 45° and 55° of Fahrenheit), and another for cold and foul weather, of broad cloth, lined with fur, and denominated a "dreadnought."

Such are a few of the articles with which every sensible traveller will provide himself before leaving *Dulce Domum* to brave the perils of a Tour through the Hop-districts.

"If circumstances compel you," continues the Doctor, "to ride on the outside of a coach, put on two shirts and two pair of stockings, turn up the collar of your great-coat, and tie a handkerchief round it, and have plenty of dry straw to set your feet on."

In our younger days we used to ride a pretty considerable deal on the outside of coaches, and much hardship did we endure before we hit on the discovery above promulgated. We once rode outside from Edinburgh to London, in winter, without a great-coat, in nankeen trousers *sans* drawers, and all other articles of our dress thin and light in proportion. That we are alive at this day, is no less singular than true—no more true than singular. We have known ourselves so firmly frozen to the leathern ceiling of the mail-coach, that it required the united strength of coachman, guard, and the other three outsides, to separate us from the vehicle, to which we adhered as part and parcel. All at once the device of the double shirt flashed upon us—and it underwent signal improvements before we reduced the theory to practice. For, first, we endued ourselves with a leather shirt—then with a flannel one—and then, in regular succession, with three linen shirts. This concluded the Series of Shirts. Then commenced the waistcoats. A plain woollen waistcoat without buttons—with hooks and eyes—took the lead, and kept it; it was closely pressed by what is, in common palaver, called an under-waistcoat—the body being flannel, the breast-edges bearing a pretty pattern of stripes or bars—then came a natty red waistcoat, of which we were particularly proud, and of which the effect on landlady, bar-maid, and chamber-maid,

we remember was irresistible—and, fourthly and finally, to complete that department of our investiture, shone with soft yet sprightly lustre — the double-breasted bright-buttoned Buff. Five and four are nine—so that between our carcass and our coat, it might have been classically said of our dress —"Novies interfusa coercet." At this juncture of affairs began the coats, which—as it is a great mistake to wear too many coats—never exceeded six. The first used generally to be a pretty old coat that had lived to moralise over the mutability of human affairs—thread-bare—napless—and what ignorant people might have called shabby-genteel. It was followed by a plain, sensible, honest, unpretending, commonplace, everyday sort of a coat—and not, perhaps, of the very best merino. Over it was drawn, with some little difficulty, what had, in its prime of life, attracted universal admiration in Princes Street, as a blue surtout. Then came your regular olive-coloured great-coat—not braided and embroidered *à la militaire*—for we scorned to sham travelling-captain — but *simplex munditiis*, plain in its neatness ; not wanting then was your shag-hued wraprascal, betokening that its wearer was up to snuff—and to close this strange eventful history, the seven-caped Dreadnought, that loved to dally with the sleets and snows—held in calm contempt Boreas, Notus, Auster, Eurus, and "the rest"—and drove baffled Winter howling behind the Pole.

The same principle of accumulation was made applicable to the neck. No stock. Neckcloth above neckcloth—beginning with singles—and then getting into the full uncut squares—the amount of the whole being somewhere about a dozen : The concluding neckcloth worn cravat-fashion, and flowing down the breast in a cascade, like that of an attorney-general. Round our cheek and ear, leaving the lips at liberty to breathe and imbibe, was wreathed, in undying remembrance of the bravest of the brave, a Jem Belcher Fogle—and beneath the cravat-cascade a comforter netted by the fair hands of her who had kissed us at our departure, and was sighing for our return. One hat we always found sufficient—and that a black beaver —for a lily castor suits not the knowledge-box of a friend to "a limited constitutional and hereditary monarchy."

As to our lower extremities—One pair only of roomy shoes —one pair of stockings of the finest lamb's-wool—another of

common close worsted, knit by the hand of a Lancashire witch —thirdly, Shetland hose. All three pair reaching well up towards the fork—each about an inch-and-a-half longer than its predecessor. Flannel drawers—one pair only—within the lamb's-wool, and touching the instep—then one pair of elderly casimeres, of yore worn at balls—one pair of Manchester white cords—ditto of strong black quilt trousers, "capacious and serene"—and at or beneath the freezing-point, overalls of the same stuff as "Johnny's grey breeks"—neat but not gaudy—mud-repellers—themselves a host—never in all their lives "thoroughly wet through"—frost-proof—and often mistaken by the shepherd on the wold, as the Telegraph hung for a moment on the misty upland, for the philibeg of Phœbus in his dawn-dress, hastily slipt on as he bade farewell to some star-paramour, and, like a giant about to run a race, devoured the cerulean course of day, as if impatient to reach the goal set in the Western Sea.

DR KITCHINER.

FOURTH COURSE.

Pray, reader, do you know what line of conduct you ought to pursue if you are to sleep on the road? "The earlier you arrive," says the Doctor, "and the earlier after your arrival you apply, the better the chance of getting a good bed—this done, order your luggage to your room. A travelling-bag, or a 'sac de nuit,' in addition to your trunk, is very necessary; it should be large enough to contain one or two changes of linen—a night-shirt—shaving apparatus—comb, clothes, tooth and hair brushes, &c. Take care, too, to see your sheets well aired, and that you can fasten your room at night. Carry fire-arms also, and take the first unostentatious opportunity of showing your pistols to the landlord. However well-made your pistols, however carefully you have chosen your flint, and however dry your powder, look to the priming and touch-hole every night. Let your pistols be double-barrelled, and with spring bayonets."

Now, really, it appears to us, that in lieu of double-barrelled pistols with spring bayonets, it would be advisable to substitute a brace of black-puddings for daylight, and a brace of Oxford or Bologna sausages for the dark hours. They will be equally formidable to the robber, and far safer to yourself. Indeed we should like to see duelling black-puddings, or sausages, introduced at Chalk-Farm;—and, that etiquette might not be violated, each party might take his antagonist's weapon, and the seconds, as usual, see them loaded. Surgeons will have to attend as usual. Far more blood, indeed, would be thus spilt, than according to the present fashion.

The Doctor, as might be expected, makes a mighty rout—a prodigious fuss—all through the Oracle, about damp sheets; he must immediately see the chambermaid, and overlook the

airing with his own hands and eyes. He is also an advocate of the warming-pan—and for the adoption, indeed, of every imaginable scheme for excluding death from his chamber. He goes on the basis of everything being as it should not be in inns—and often reminds us of our old friend Death-in-the-Pot. Nay, as Travellers never can be sure that those who have slept in the beds before them were not afflicted with some contagious disease, whenever they can they should carry their own sheets with them—namely, a "light eider-down quilt, and two dressed hart-skins, to be put on the mattresses, to hinder the disagreeable contact. These are to be covered with the traveller's own sheets—and if an eider-down quilt be not sufficient to keep him warm, his coat put upon it will increase the heat sufficiently. If the traveller is not provided with these accommodations, it will sometimes be prudent not to undress entirely; however, the neckcloth, gaiters, shirt, and everything which checks the circulation, must be loosened."

Clean sheets, the Doctor thinks, are rare in inns; and he believes that it is the practice to "take them from the bed, sprinkle them with water, fold them down, and put them into a press. When they are wanted again, they are, literally speaking, shown to the fire, and, in a reeking state, laid on the bed. The traveller is tired and sleepy, dreams of that pleasure or business which brought him from home, and the remotest thing from his mind is, that from the very repose which he fancies has refreshed him, he has received the rheumatism. The receipt, therefore, to sleep comfortably at inns, is to take your own sheets, to have plenty of flannel gowns, and to promise, and take care to pay, a handsome consideration for the liberty of choosing your bed."

Now, Doctor, suppose all travellers behaved at inns on such principles, what a perpetual commotion there would be in the house! The kitchens, back-kitchens, laundries, drying-rooms, would at all times be crammed choke-full of a miscellaneous rabble of Editors, Authors, Lords, Baronets, Squires, Doctors of Divinity, Fellows of Colleges, Half-pay Officers, and Bagmen, oppressing the chambermaids to death, and in the headlong gratification of their passion for well-aired sheets, setting fire so incessantly to public premises as to raise the rate of insurance to a ruinous height, and thus bring bankruptcy on all the principal establishments in Great Britain. But shut-

ting our eyes, for a moment, to such general conflagration and bankruptcy, and indulging ourselves in the violent supposition that some inns might still continue to exist, think, O think, worthy Doctor, to what other fatal results this system, if universally acted upon, would, in a very few years of the transitory life of man, inevitably lead! In the first place, in a country where all travellers carried with them their own sheets, none would be kept in inns except for the use of the establishment's own members. This would be inflicting a vital blow, indeed, on the inns of a country. For mark, in the second place, that the blankets would not be long of following the sheets. The blankets would soon fly after the sheets on the wings of love and despair. Thirdly, are you so ignorant, Doctor, of this world and its ways, as not to see that the bedsteads would, in the twinkling of an eye, follow the blankets? What a wild, desolate, wintry appearance would a bedroom then exhibit!

The foresight of such consequences as these may well make a man shudder. We have no objections, however, to suffer the Doctor himself, and a few other occasional damp-dreading old quizzes, "to see the bed-clothes put to the fire in their presence," merely at the expense of subjugating themselves to the derision of all the chambermaids, cooks, scullions, boots, ostlers, and painters. (The painter is the artist who is employed in inns, to paint the buttered toast. He always works in oils. As the Director-General would say—he deals in buttery touches.) Their feverish and restless anxiety about sheets, and their agitated discourse on damps and deaths, hold them up to vulgar eyes in the light of lunatics. They become the groundwork of practical jokes—perhaps are bitten to death by fleas; for a chambermaid, of a disposition naturally witty and cruel, has a dangerous power put into her hands, in the charge of blankets. The Doctor's whole soul and body are wrapt up in well-aired sheets; but the insidious Abigail, tormented by his flustering, becomes in turn the tormentor—and selecting the yellowest, dingiest, and dirtiest pair of blankets to be found throughout the whole gallery of garrets (those for years past used by long-bearded old-clothesmen Jews), with a wicked leer that would lull all suspicion asleep in a man of a far less inflammable temperament, she literally envelopes him in vermin, and after a night of one of the plagues of Egypt,

the Doctor rises in the morning, from top to bottom absolutely tattooed!

The Doctor, of course, is one of those travellers who believe that unless they use the most ingenious precautions, they will be uniformly robbed and murdered in inns. The villains steal upon you during the midnight hour, when all the world is asleep. They leave their shoes down stairs, and leopard-like, ascend with velvet, or—what is almost as noiseless—worsted steps, the wooden stairs. True, that your breeches are beneath your bolster—but that trick of travellers has long been "as notorious as the sun at noonday;" and although you are aware of your breeches, with all the ready money perhaps that you are worth in this world, eloping from beneath your parental eye, you in vain try to cry out—for a long, broad, iron hand, with ever so many iron fingers, is on your mouth; another, with still more numerous digits, compresses your windpipe, while a low hoarse voice, in a whisper to which Sarah Siddons's was empty air, on pain of instant death enforces silence from a man unable for his life to utter a single word; and after pulling off all the bed-clothes, and then clothing you with curses, the ruffians, whose accent betrays them to be Irishmen, inflict upon you divers wanton wounds with a blunt instrument, probably a crow-bar—swearing by Satan and all his saints, that if you stir an inch of your body before daybreak, they will instantly return, cut your throat, knock out your brains, sack you, and carry you off for sale to a surgeon: Therefore you must use pocket door-bolts, which are applicable to almost all sorts of doors, and on many occasions save the property and life of the traveller. The corkscrew door-fastening the Doctor recommends as the simplest. This is screwed in between the door and the door-post, and unites them so firmly, that great power is required to force a door so fastened. They are as portable as common corkscrews, and their weight does not exceed an ounce and a half. The safety of your bedroom should always be carefully examined; and in case of bolts not being at hand, it will be useful to hinder entrance into the room by putting a table and chair upon it against the door. Take a peep below the bed, and into the closets, and every place where concealment is possible—of course, although the Doctor forgets to suggest it, into the chimney. A friend of the Doctor's used to place a bureau

against the door, and "thereon he set a basin and ewer in such a position as easily to rattle, so that, on being shook, they instantly became *molto agitato.*" Upon one alarming occasion this device frightened away one of the chambermaids, or some other Paulina Pry, who attempted to steal on the virgin sleep of the travelling Joseph, who all the time was hiding his head beneath the bolster. Joseph, however, believed that it was a horrible midnight assassin, with mustaches and a dagger. "The chattering of the crockery gave the alarm, and the attempt, after many attempts, was abandoned."

With all these fearful apprehensions-in his mind, Dr Kitchiner must have been a man of great natural personal courage and intrepidity, to have slept even once in his whole lifetime from home. What dangers must we have passed, who used to plump in, without a thought of damp in the bed, or scamp below it—closet and chimney uninspected, door unbolted and unscrewed, exposed to rape, robbery, and murder! It is mortifying to think that we should be alive at this day. Nobody, male or female, thought it worth their while to rob, ravish, or murder us! There we lay, forgotten by the whole world—till the crowing of cocks, or the ringing of bells, or blundering Boots insisting on it that we were a Manchester Bagman, who had taken an inside in the Heavy at five, broke our repose, and Sol laughing in at the unshuttered and uncurtained window showed us the floor of our dormitory, not streaming with a gore of blood. We really know not whether to be most proud of having been the favourite child of Fortune, or the neglected brat of Fate. One only precaution did we ever use to take against assassination, and all the other ills that flesh is heir to, sleep where one may, and that was to say inwardly a short fervent prayer, humbly thanking our Maker for all the happiness—let us trust it was innocent—of the day; and humbly imploring his blessing on all the hopes of to-morrow. For, at the time we speak of, we were young—and every morning, whatever the atmosphere might be, rose bright and beautiful with hopes that, far as the eyes of the soul could reach, glittered on earth's, and heaven's, and life's horizon!

But suppose that after all this trouble to get himself bolted and screwed into a paradisaical tabernacle of a dormitory, there had suddenly rung through the house the cry of FIRE —FIRE—FIRE! how was Dr Kitchiner to get out? Tables,

bureaus, benches, chairs, blocked up the only door—all laden with wash-hand basins and other utensils, the whole crockery shepherdesses of the chimney-piece, double-barrelled pistols with spring bayonets ready to shoot and stab, without distinction of persons, as their proprietor was madly seeking to escape the roaring flames! Both windows are iron-bound, with all their shutters, and over and above tightly fastened with "the cork-screw fastening, the simplest that we have seen." The wind-board is in like manner, and by the same unhappy contrivance, firmly jammed into the jaws of the chimney, so egress to the Doctor up the vent is wholly denied —no fire-engine in the town—but one under repair. There has not been a drop of rain for a month, and the river is not only distant but dry. The element is growling along the galleries like a lion, and the room is filling with something more deadly than back-smoke. A shrill voice is heard crying —"Number 5 will be burned alive! Number 5 will be burned alive! Is there no possibility of saving the life of Number 5?" The Doctor falls down before the barricado, and is stretched all his hapless length fainting on the floor. At last the door is burst open, and landlord, landlady, chambermaid, and boots—each in a different key—from manly bass to childish treble, demand of Number 5 if he be a murderer or a madman—for, gentle reader, it has been a——Dream.

We must hurry to a close, and shall perform the short remainder of our journey on foot. The first volume of the Oracle concludes with "Observations on Pedestrians." Here we are at home—and could, we imagine, have given the Doctor a mile in the hour in a year-match. The strength of man, we are given distinctly to understand by the Doctor, is "in the ratio of the performance of the restorative process, which is as the quantity and quality of what he puts into his stomach, the energy of that organ, and the quantity of exercise he takes." This statement of the strength of man may be unexceptionably true, and most philosophical to those who are up to it—but to us it resembles a definition we have heard of thunder, "the conjection of the sulphur congeals the matter." It appears to us that a strong stomach is not the sole constituent of a strong man—but that it is not much amiss to be provided with a strong back, a strong breast, strong thighs, strong legs, and strong feet. With a strong stomach alone—yea, even the

stomach of a horse—a man will make but a sorry Pedestrian. The Doctor, however, speedily redeems himself by saying admirably well, "that nutrition does not depend more on the state of the stomach, or of what we put into it, than it does on the stimulus given to the system by exercise, which alone can produce that perfect circulation of the blood which is required to throw off superfluous secretions, and give the absorbents an appetite to suck up fresh materials. This requires the action of every petty artery, and of the minutest ramifications of every nerve and fibre in our body." Thus, he remarks, a little further on, by way of illustration, "that a man, suffering under a fit of the vapours, after half an hour's brisk ambulation, will often find that he has walked it off, and that the action of the body has exonerated the mind."

The Doctor warms as he walks—and is very near leaping over the fence of Political Economy. "Providence, he remarks, furnishes materials, but expects that we should work them up for ourselves. The earth must be laboured before it gives its increase, and when it is forced to produce its several products, how many hands must they pass through before they are fit for use! Manufactures, trade, and agriculture, naturally employ more than nineteen persons out of twenty; and as for those who are, by the condition in which they are born, exempted from work, they are more miserable than the rest of mankind, unless they daily and duly employ themselves in that VOLUNTARY LABOUR WHICH GOES BY THE NAME OF EXERCISE." Inflexible justice, however, forces us to say, that although the Doctor throws a fine philosophical light over the most general principles of walking, as they are involved in "that voluntary labour which goes by the name of exercise," yet he falls into frequent and fatal error when he descends into the particulars of the practice of pedestrianism. Thus, he says, that no person should sit down to a hearty meal immediately after any great exertion, either of mind or body—that is, one might say, after a few miles of Plinlimmon, or a few pages of the Principia. Let the man, quoth he, "who comes home fatigued by bodily exertion, especially if he feel heated by it, throw his legs upon a chair, and remain quite tranquil and composed, that the energy which has been dispersed to the extremities may have time to return to the stomach, when it is required." To all this we say—Fudge! The sooner you get hold of

a leg of roasted mutton the better; but meanwhile, off rapidly with a pot of porter—then leisurely on with a clean shirt—wash your face and hands in gelid—none of your tepid water. There is no harm done if you should shave—then keep walking up and down the parlour rather impatiently, for such conduct is natural, and in all things act agreeably to nature—stir up the waiter with some original jest by way of stimulant, and to give the knave's face a well-pleased stare—and never doubting "that the energy which has been dispersed to the extremities" has had ample time to return to the stomach, in God's name fall to! and take care that the second course shall not appear till there is no vestige left of the first—a second course being looked on by the judicious moralist and pedestrian very much in the light in which the poet has made a celebrated character consider it,—

> "Nor fame I slight—nor for her favours call—
> She comes unlook'd for—if she comes at all."

To prove how astonishingly our strength may be diminished by indolence, the Doctor tells us, that meeting a gentleman who had lately returned from India, to his inquiry after his health he replied, "Why, better—better, thank ye—I think I begin to feel some symptoms of the return of a little English energy. Do you know that the day before yesterday I was in such high spirits, and felt so strong, I actually put on one of my stockings myself?"

The Doctor then asserts, that it "has been repeatedly proved that a man can travel further for a week or a month than a horse." On reading this sentence to Will Whipcord —"Yes, sir," replied that renowned Professor of the Newmarket Philosophy, "that's all right, sir—a man can beat a horse!"

Now, Will Whipcord may be right in his opinion, and a man may beat a horse. But it never has been tried: There is no match of pedestrianism on record between a first-rate man and a first-rate horse; and as soon as there is, we shall lay our money on the horse—only mind, the horse carries no weight, and he must be allowed to do his work on turf. We know that Arab horses will carry their rider, provision and provender, arms and accoutrements (no light weight) across the desert, eighty miles a-day, for many days—and that for

four days they have gone a hundred miles a-day. That would have puzzled Captain Barclay in his prime, the Prince of Pedestrians. However, be that as it may, the comparative pedestrian powers of man and horse have never yet been ascertained by any accredited match in England.

The Doctor then quotes an extract from a Pedestrian Tour in Wales by a Mr Shepherd, who, we are afraid, is no great headpiece, though we shall be happy to find ourselves in error. Mr Shepherd, speaking of the inconveniencies and difficulties attending a pedestrian excursion, says, "that at one time the roads are rendered so muddy by the rain, that it is almost impossible to proceed;"—"at other times you are exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and by wasting time under a tree or a hedge are benighted in your journey, and again reduced to an uncomfortable dilemma." "Another disadvantage is, that your track is necessarily more confined —a deviation of ten or twelve miles makes an important difference, which, if you were on horseback, would be considered as trivial." "Under all these circumstances," he says, "it may appear rather remarkable that we should have chosen a pedestrian excursion—*in answer to which, it may be observed, that we were not apprised of these things till we had experienced them.*" What! Mr Shepherd, were you, who we presume have reached the age of puberty, not apprised, before you penetrated as a pedestrian into the Principality, that "roads are rendered muddy by the rain?" Had you never met, either in your experience of life, or in the course of your reading, proof positive that pedestrians "are exposed to the inclemency of the weather?" That, if a man will linger too long under a tree or a hedge when the sun is going down, "he will be benighted?" Under what serene atmosphere, in what happy clime, have you pursued your preparatory studies *sub dio?* But, our dear Mr Shepherd, why waste time under the shelter of a tree or a hedge? Waste time nowhere, our young and unknown friend. What the worse would you have been of being soaked to the skin? Besides, consider the danger you ran of being killed by lightning, had there been a few flashes, under a tree? Further, what will become of you, if you addict yourself on every small emergency to trees and hedges, when the country you walk through happens to be as bare as the palm of your hand? Button your jacket,

good sir—scorn an umbrella—emerge boldly from the sylvan shade, snap your fingers at the pitiful pelting of the pitiless storm—poor spite indeed in Densissimus Imber—and we will insure your life for a presentation copy of your Tour against all the diseases that leapt out of Pandora's box, not only till you have reached the Inn at Capel-Cerig, but your own home in England (we forget the county)—ay, till your marriage, and the baptism of your first-born.

Dr Kitchiner seems to have been much frightened by Mr Shepherd's picture of a storm in a puddle, and proposes a plan of alleviation of one great inconvenience of pedestrianising. "Persons," quoth he, "who take a pedestrian excursion, and intend to subject themselves to the uncertainties of accommodation, by going across the country and visiting unfrequented paths, will act wisely to carry with them a *piece of oil-skin* to sit upon while taking refreshments out of doors, which they will often find needful during such excursions." To save trouble, the breech of the pedestrian's breeches should be a patch of oil-skin. Here a question of great difficulty and importance arises—Breeches or trousers? Dr Kitchiner is decidedly for breeches. "The garter," says he, "should be below the knee, and breeches are much better than trousers. The general adoption of those which, till our late wars, were exclusively used by 'the Lords of the Ocean,' has often excited my astonishment. However convenient trousers may be to the sailor who has to cling to slippery shrouds, for the landsman nothing can be more inconvenient. They are heating in summer, and in winter they are collectors of mud. Moreover, they occasion a necessity for wearing garters. Breeches are, in all respects, much more convenient. These should have the knee-band three quarters of an inch wide, lined on the upper side with a piece of plush, and fastened with a buckle, which is much easier than even double strings, and, by observing the strap, you always know the exact degree of tightness that is required to keep up the stocking; any pressure beyond that is prejudicial, especially to those who walk long distances."

We are strongly inclined to agree with the Doctor in his panegyric on breeches. True, that in the forenoons, especially if of a dark colour, such as black, and worn with white, or even grey or bluish, stockings, they are apt, in the present

state of public taste, to stamp you a schoolmaster, or a small grocer in full dress, or an exciseman going to a ball. We could dispense too with the knee-buckles and plush lining—though we allow the one might be ornamental and the other useful. But what think you, gentle reader, of walking with a Pedometer? A Pedometer is an instrument cunningly devised to tell you how far and how fast you walk, and is, quoth the Doctor, a "perambulator in miniature." The box containing the wheels is made of the size of a watch-case, and goes into the breeches pocket, and by means of a string and hook, fastened at the waistband or at the knee, the number of steps a man takes, in his regular paces, are registered from the action of the spring upon the internal wheel-work at every step, to the amount of 30,000. It is necessary, to ascertain the distance walked, that the average length of one pace be precisely known, and that multiplied by the number of steps registered on the dial-plate.

All this is very ingenious; and we know one tolerable pedestrian who is also a Pedometrist. But no Pedometrician will ever make a fortune in a mountainous island, like Great Britain, where pedestrianism is indigenous to the soil. A good walker is as regular in his going as clock-work. He has his different paces—three, three and a half—four, four and a half—five, five and a half—six miles an hour—toe and heel. A common watch, therefore, is to him, in the absence of milestones, as good as a Pedometer, with this great and indisputable advantage, that a common watch continues to go even after you have yourself stopped, whereas, the moment you sit down on your oil-skin patch, why, your Pedometer (which, indeed, from its name and construction, is not unreasonable) immediately stands still. Neither, we believe, can you accurately note the pulse of a friend in a fever by a Pedometer.

What pleasure on this earth transcends a breakfast after a twelve-mile walk? Or is there in this sublunary scene a delight superior to the gradual, dying-away, dreamy drowsiness that, at the close of a long summer day's journey up hill and down dale, seals up the glimmering eyes with honey-dew, and stretches out, under the loving hands of nourrice Nature, the whole elongated animal economy, steeped in rest divine from the organ of veneration to the point of the great toe, be

it on a bed of down, chaff, straw, or heather, in palace, hall, hotel, or hut? If in an inn, nobody interferes with you in meddling officiousness; neither landlord, bagman, waiter, chambermaid, boots;—you are left to yourself without being neglected. Your bell may not be emulously answered by all the menials on the establishment, but a smug or shock-headed drawer appears in good time; and if mine host may not always dignify your dinner by the deposition of the first dish, yet, influenced by the rumour that soon spreads through the premises, he bows farewell at your departure, with a shrewd suspicion that you are a nobleman in disguise.

SOLILOQUY ON THE SEASONS.

FIRST RHAPSODY.

No weather more pleasant than that of a mild WINTER day. So gracious the season, that Hyems is like Ver—Januarius like Christopher North. Art thou the Sun of whom Milton said,—

> "Looks through the horizontal misty air,
> Shorn of his beams,"

an image of disconsolate obscuration? Bright art thou as at meridian on a June Sabbath; but effusing a more temperate lustre, not unfelt by the sleeping though not insensate earth. She stirs in her sleep, and murmurs—the mighty mother; and quiet as herself, though broad awake, her old ally the ship-bearing sea. What though the woods be leafless—they look as alive as when laden with umbrage; and who can tell what is going on now within the heart of that calm oak grove? The fields laugh not now—but here and there they smile. If we see no flowers we think of them—and less of the perished than of the unborn; for regret is vain, and hope is blest; in peace there is the promise of joy—and therefore in the silent pastures a perfect beauty how restorative to man's troubled heart!

The Shortest Day in all the year—yet is it lovelier than the Longest. Can that be the voice of birds? With the lave-rock's lyric our fancy filled the sky—with the throstle's roundelay it awoke the wood. In the air life is audible—circling unseen. Such serenity must be inhabited by happiness. Ha! there thou art, our Familiar—the self-same Robin Redbreast that pecked at our nursery window, and used to warble from the gable of the school-house his sweet winter song!

In company we are silent—in solitude we soliloquise. So dearly do we love our own voice that we cannot bear to hear

it mixed with that of others—perhaps drowned; and then our bashfulness tongue-ties us in the hush expectant of our "golden opinions," when all eyes are turned to the speechless "old man eloquent," and you might hear a tangle dishevelling itself in Neæra's hair. But all alone by ourselves, in the country, among trees standing still among untrodden leaves—as now—how we do speak! All thoughts—all feelings—desire utterance; left to themselves they are not happy till they have evolved into words—winged words that sometimes settle on the ground, like moths on flowers—sometimes seek the sky, like eagles above the clouds.

No such soliloquies in written poetry as these of ours—the act of composition is fatal as frost to their flow; yet composition there is at such solitary times going on among the moods of the mind, as among the clouds on a still but not airless sky, perpetual but imperceptible transformations of the beautiful, obedient to the bidding of the spirit of beauty.

Who but Him who made it knoweth aught of the Laws of Spirit? All of us may know much of what is "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best," in obedience to them; but leaving the open day, we enter at once into thickest night. Why at this moment do we see a spot once only visited by us—unremembered for ever so many flights of black or bright winged years—see it in fancy as it then was in nature, with the same dewdrops on that wondrous myrtle beheld but on that morning—such a myrtle as no other eyes beheld ever on this earth but ours, and the eyes of one now in heaven?

Another year is about to die—and how wags the world? "What great events are on the gale?" Go ask our statesmen. But their rule—their guidance is but over the outer world, and almost powerless their folly or their wisdom over the inner region in which we mortals live, and move, and have our being, where the fall of a throne makes no more noise than that of a leaf!

Thank Heaven! Summer and Autumn are both dead and buried at last, and white lie the snow on their graves! Youth is the season of all sorts of insolence, and therefore we can forgive and forget almost anything in Spring. He has always been a privileged personage; and we have no doubt that he played his pranks even in Paradise. To-day, he meets you unexpectedly on the hill-side; and was there ever a face in

this world so celestialised by smiles! All the features are framed of light. Gaze into his eyes, and you feel that in the untroubled lustre there is something more sublime than in the heights of the cloudless heavens, or in the depths of the waveless seas. More sublime, because essentially spiritual. There stands the young Angel, entranced in the conscious mystery of his own beautiful and blessed being; and the earth becomes all at once fit region for the sojourn of the Son of the Morning. So might some great painter image the First-born of the Year, till nations adored the picture.—To-morrow you repair, with hermit steps, to the Mount of the Vision, and,

"Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,"

Spring clutches you by the hair with the fingers of frost; blashes a storm of sleet in your face, and finishes, perhaps, by folding you in a winding-sheet of snow, in which you would infallibly perish but for a pocket-pistol of Glenlivet.—The day after to-morrow, you behold him—Spring—walking along the firmament, sad, but not sullen—mournful, but not miserable—disturbed, but not despairing—now coming out towards you in a burst of light—and now fading away from you in a gathering of gloom—even as one might figure in his imagination a fallen Angel. On Thursday, confound you if you know what the deuce to make of his Springship. There he is, stripped to the buff—playing at hide-and-seek, hare-and-hound, with a queer crazy crony of his in a fur cap, swan-down waistcoat, and hairy breeches, Lodbrog or Winter. You turn up the whites of your eyes, and the browns of your hands in amazement, till the Two, by way of change of pastime, cease their mutual vagaries, and, like a couple of hawks diverting themselves with an owl, in conclusion buffet you off the premises. You insert the occurrence, with suitable reflections, in your Meteorological Diary, under the head—Spring.—On Friday, nothing is seen of you but the blue tip of your nose, for you are confined to bed by rheumatism, and nobody admitted to your sleepless sanctum but your condoling Mawsey. 'Tis a pity. For never since the flood-greened earth on her first resurrection morn laughed around Ararat, spanned was she by such a Rainbow! By all that is various and vanishing, the arch seems many miles broad, and many miles high, and all creation to be gladly and gloriously gathered together without being crowded—plains, woods, villages, towns, hills,

and clouds, beneath the pathway of Spring, once more an Angel—an unfallen Angel! While the tinge that trembles into transcendent hues fading and fluctuating—deepening and dying—now gone, as if for ever—and now back again in an instant, as if breathing and alive—is felt, during all that wavering visitation, to be of all sights the most evanescent, and yet inspirative of a beauty-born belief, bright as the sun that flung the image on the cloud—profound as the gloom it illumines—that it shone and is shining there at the bidding of Him who inhabiteth eternity.—The grim noon of Saturday, after a moaning morning, and one silent intermediate lour of grave-like stillness, begins to gleam fitfully with lightning like a maniac's eye; and is not that

"The sound
Of thunder heard remote?"

On earth wind there is none—not so much as a breath. But there is a strong wind in heaven—for see how that huge cloud-city, a night within a day, comes moving on along the hidden mountain-tops, and hangs over the loch all at once black as pitch, except that here and there a sort of sullen purple heaves upon the long slow swell, and here and there along the shores—how caused we know not—are seen, but heard not, the white melancholy breakers! Is no one smitten blind? No! Thank God! But ere the thanksgiving has been worded, an airquake has split asunder the cloud-city, the night within the day, and all its towers and temples are disordered along the firmament, to a sound that might waken the dead. Where are ye, ye echo-hunters, that grudge not to purchase gunpowder explosions on Lowood bowling-green at four shillings the blast? See! there are our artillerymen stalking from battery to battery—all hung up aloft facing the west—or "each standing by his gun" with lighted match, moving or motionless, Shadow-figures, and all clothed in black-blue uniform, with blood-red facings portentously glancing in the sun, as he strives to struggle into heaven. The Generalissimo of all the forces, who is he but—Spring?—Hand in hand with Spring, Sabbath descends from heaven unto earth; and are not their feet beautiful on the mountains? Small as is the voice of that tinkling bell from that humble spire, overtopped by its coeval trees, yet is it heard in the heart of infinitude. So is the bleating of these silly sheep

on the braes—and so is that voice of psalms, all at once rising so spirit-like, as if the very kirk were animated, and singing a joyous song in the wilderness to the ear of the Most High. For all things are under his care—those that, as we dream, have no life—the flowers, and the herbs, and the trees —those that some dim scripture seems to say, when they die, utterly perish—and those that all bright scripture, whether written in the book of God, or the book of Nature, declares will live for ever!

If such be the character and conduct of Spring during one week, wilt thou not forget and forgive — with us — much occasional conduct on his part that appears not only inexplicable, but incomprehensible? But we cannot extend the same indulgence to Summer and to Autumn. Summer is a season come to the years of discretion, and ought to conduct himself like a staid, sober, sensible, middle-aged man, not past, but passing, his prime. Now, Summer, we are sorry to say it, often behaves in a way to make his best friends ashamed of him—in a way absolutely disgraceful to a person of his time of life. Having picked a quarrel with the Sun—his benefactor, nay, his father—what else could he expect but that that enlightened Christian would altogether withhold his countenance from so undutiful and ungrateful a child, and leave him to travel along the mire and beneath the clouds? For some weeks Summer was sulky—and sullenly scorned to shed a tear. His eyes were like ice. By-and-by, like a great school-boy, he began to whine and whimper—and when he found that would not do, he blubbered like the booby of the lowest form. Still the Sun would not look on him—or if he did, 'twas with a sudden and short half-smile half-scowl that froze the ingrate's blood. At last the Summer grew contrite, and the Sun forgiving, the one burst out into a flood of tears, the other into a flood of light. In simple words, the Summer wept and the Sun smiled—and for one broken month there was a perpetual alternation of rain and radiance! How beautiful is penitence! How beautiful forgiveness! For one week the Summer was restored to his pristine peace and old luxuriance, and the desert blossomed like the rose.

Therefore ask we the Summer's pardon for thanking Heaven that he was dead. Would that he were alive again, and buried not for ever beneath the yellow forest leaves! O thou first,

faint, fair, finest tinge of dawning Light that streaks the still-sleeping yet just-waking face of the morn, Light and no-Light, a shadowy Something, that as we gaze is felt to be growing into an emotion that must be either Innocence or Beauty, or both blending together into devotion before Deity, once more duly visible in the divine colouring that forebodes another day to mortal life—before Thee what holy bliss to kneel upon the greensward in some forest glade, while every leaf is a-tremble with dewdrops, and the happy little birds are beginning to twitter, yet motionless among the boughs—before Thee to kneel as at a shrine, and breathe deeper and deeper—as the lustre waxeth purer and purer, brighter and more bright, till range after range arise of crimson clouds in altitude sublime, and breast above breast expands of yellow woods softly glittering in their far-spread magnificence—then what holy bliss to breathe deeper and deeper unto Him who holds in the hollow of his hand the heavens and the earth, our high but most humble orisons! But now it is Day, and broad awake seems the whole joyful world. The clouds—lustrous no more—are all anchored on the sky, white as fleets waiting for the wind. Time is not felt—and one might dream that the Day was to endure for ever. Yet the great river rolls on in the light—and why will he leave those lovely inland woods for the naked shores? Why—responds some voice—hurry we on our own lives—impetuous and passionate far more than he with all his cataracts—as if anxious to forsake the regions of the upper day for the dim place from which we yet recoil in fear—the dim place which imagination sometimes seems to see even through the sunshine, beyond the bourne of this our unintelligible being, stretching sea-like into a still more mysterious night! Long as a Midsummer Day is, it has gone by like a Heron's flight. The sun is setting!—and let him set without being scribbled upon by Christopher North. We took a pen-and-ink sketch of him in a "Day on Windermere." Poor nature is much to be pitied among painters and poets. They are perpetually falling into

> "Such perusal of her face
> As they would draw it."

And often must she be sick of the Curious Impertinents. But a Curious Impertinent are not we—if ever there was one

beneath the skies, a devout worshipper of Nature; and though we often seem to heed not her shrine — it stands in our imagination, like a temple in a perpetual Sabbath.

It was poetically and piously said by the Ettrick Shepherd, at a Noctes, that there is no such thing in nature as bad weather. Take Summer, which early in our soliloquy we abused in good set terms. Its weather was broken, but not bad; and much various beauty and sublimity is involved in the epithet "broken," when applied to the "season of the year." Commonplace people, especially town-dwellers, who *flit* into the country for a few months, have a silly and absurd idea of Summer, which all the atmospherical phenomena fail to drive out of their foolish fancies. They insist on its remaining with us for half a year at least, and on its being dressed in its Sunday's best every day in the week as long as they continue in country quarters. The Sun must rise, like a labourer, at the very earliest hour, shine all day, and go to bed late, else they treat him contumeliously, and declare that he is not worth his meat. Should he retire occasionally behind a cloud, which it seems most natural and reasonable for one to do who lives so much in the public eye, why, a whole watering-place, uplifting a face of dissatisfied expostulation to heaven, exclaims, "Where is the Sun? Are we never to have any Sun?" They also insist that there shall be no rain of more than an hour's duration in the daytime, but that it shall all fall by night. Yet when the Sun does exert himself, as if at their bidding, and is shining, as he supposes, to their heart's content, up go a hundred green parasols in his face, enough to startle the celestial steeds in his chariot. A *broken* summer for us. Now and then a few continuous days —perhaps a whole week—but, if that be denied, now and then,

"Like angels' visits, few and far between,"

one single Day—blue-spread over heaven, green-spread over earth — no cloud above, no shade below, save that dove-coloured marble lying motionless like the mansions of peace, and that pensive gloom that falls from some old castle or venerable wood—the stillness of a sleeping joy, to our heart profounder than that of death, in the air, in the sky, and resting on our mighty mother's undisturbed breast—no lowing on

the hills, no bleating on the braes—the rivers almost silent as lochs, and the lochs, just visible in their aerial purity, floating dream-like between earth and sky, imbued with the beauty of both, and seeming to belong to either, as the heart melts to human tenderness, or beyond all mortal loves the imagination soars! Such days seem now to us—as memory and imagination half restore and half create the past into such weather as may have shone over the bridal morn of our first parents in Paradise—to have been frequent—nay, to have lasted all the Summer long—when our boyhood was bright from the hands of God. Each of those days was in itself a life! Yet all those sunny lives melted into one Summer—and all those Summers formed one continuous bliss. Storms and snows vanished out of our ideal year; and then morning, noon, and night, wherever we breathed, we *felt*, what now we but *know*, the inmost meaning of that profound verse of Virgil the Divine—

> "Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
> Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas.
> Largior hîc campos æther et lumine vestit
> Purpureo: solemque suum, sua sidera norunt."

Few—no such days as those seem now ever to be born. Sometimes we indeed gaze through the face into the heart of the sky, and for a moment feel that the ancient glory of the heavens has returned on our dream of life. But to the perfect beatitude of the skies there comes from the soul within us a mournful response, that betokens some wide and deep—some everlasting change. Joy is not now what joy was of yore; like a fine diamond with a flaw is now Imagination's eye; other motes than those that float through ether cross between its orb and the sun; the "fine gold has become dim," with which morning and evening of old embossed the skies; the dewdrops are not now the pearls once they were, left on

> "Flowers, and weeds as beautiful as flowers,"

by angels' and by fairies' wings; knowledge, custom, experience, fate, fortune, error, vice, and sin, have dulled, and darkened, and deadened all things; and the soul, unable to bring over the Present the ineffable bliss and beauty of the Past, almost swoons to think what a ghastly thunder-gloom may by Providence be reserved for the Future!

Nay—nay—things are not altogether so bad with us as this strain—sincere though it be as a stream from the sacred mountains—might seem to declare. We can yet enjoy a *broken* Summer. It would do your heart good to see us hobbling with our crutch along the Highland hills, *sans* great-coat or umbrella, in a summer-shower, aiblins cap in hand that our hair may grow, up to the knees in the bonny blooming heather, or clambering, like an old goat, among the cliffs. Nothing so good for gout or rheumatism as to get wet through, while the thermometer keeps ranging between 60° and 70°, three times a-day. What refreshment in the very sound—Soaking! Old bones wax dry—nerves numb—sinews stiff—flesh frail—and there is a sad drawback on the Whole Duty of Man. But a sweet, soft, sou'-wester blows "caller" on our craziness, and all our pores instinctively open their mouths at the approach of rain. Look but at those dozen downward showers, all denizens of heaven, how black, and blue, and bright they in their glee are streaming, and gleaming athwart the sunny mountain-gloom, while ever as they descend on earth, lift up the streams along the wilderness louder and louder a choral song. Look now at the heather—and smile whenever henceforth you hear people talk of *purple.* You have been wont to call a gold guinea or a sovereign *yellow*—but if you have got one in your pocket, place it on your palm, and in the light of that broom is it not a *dirty brown?* You have an emerald ring on your finger—but how grey it looks beside the *green* of those brackens, that pasture, that wood! Purple, yellow, and green, you have now seen, sir, for the first time in your life. Widening and widening over your head, all the while you have been gazing on the heather, the broom, the bracken, the pastures, and the woods, have the eternal heavens been preparing for you a vision of the sacred *Blue.* Is not that an Indigo Divine? Or, if you scorn that mercantile and manufacturing image, steal that blue from the sky, and let the lady of your love tinge but her eyelids with one touch, and a saintlier beauty will be in her upward looks as she beseeches Heaven to bless thee in her prayers! Set slowly—slowly—slowly—O Sun of Suns! as may be allowed by the laws of Nature. For not long after Thou hast sunk behind those mountains into the sea, will that celestial ROSY-RED be tabernacled in the heavens!

Meanwhile, three of the dozen showers have so soaked and steeped our old crazy carcass in refreshment, and restoration, and renewal of youth, that we should not be surprised were we to outlive that raven croaking in pure *gaieté du cœur* on the cliff. Threescore and ten years! Poo—'tis a pitiful span! At a hundred we shall cut capers—for twenty years more keep to the Highland fling—and at the close of other twenty, jig it into the grave to that matchless strathspey, the Reel of Tullochgorum!

Having thus made our peace with last Summer, can we allow the Sun to go down on our wrath towards the AUTUMN, whose back we yet see on the horizon, before he turn about to bow adieu to our hemisphere? Hollo! meet us half-way in yonder immense field of potatoes, our worthy Season, and among these peacemakers, the Mealies and the Waxies, shall we two smoke together the calumet or cigar of reconciliation. The floods fell, and the folk feared famine. The people whined over the smut in wheat, and pored pale on the Monthly Agricultural Report. Grain grew greener and greener—reapers stood at the crosses of villages, towns, and cities, passing from one to another comfortless quaichs of sma' yill, with their straw-bound sickles hanging idle across their shoulders, and with unhired-looking faces, as ragged a company as if you were to dream of a Symposium of Scarecrows. Alarmed imagination beheld harvest treading on the heels of Christmas,

"And Britain sadden'd at the long delay!"

when, whew! to dash the dismal predictions of foolish and false prophets, came rustling from all the airts, far far and wide over the rain-drenched kingdom, the great armament of the Autumnal Winds! Groaned the grain, as in sudden resurrection it lifted up its head, and knew that again the Sun was in Heaven. Death became life; and the hearts of the husbandmen sang aloud for joy. Like Turks, the reapers brandished their sickles in the breezy light, and every field glittered with Christian crescents. Auld wives and bits o' weans mingled on the rig—kilted to the knees, like the comely cummers, and the handsome hizzies, and the lo'esome lassies wi' their silken snoods—among the heather-legged Highlandmen, and the bandy Irishers, brawny all, and with hook, scythe, or flail, inferior to none of the children of men. The scene lies

in Scotland — but now, too, is England "Merry England" indeed, and outside passengers on a thousand coaches see stooks rising like stacks, and far and wide, over the tree-speckled champaign, rejoice in the sun-given promise of a glorious harvest-home. Intervenes the rest of two sunny Sabbaths sent to dry the brows of labour, and give the last ripeness to the overladen stalks that, top-heavy with aliment, fall over in their yellowy whiteness into the fast reaper's hands. Few fields now—but here and there one thin and greenish, of cold, unclean, or stony soil—are waving in the shadowy winds; for all are cleared, but some stooked stubbles from which the stooks are fast disappearing, as the huge wains seem to halt for a moment, impeded by the gates they hide, and then, crested perhaps with laughing boys and girls,

"Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings,"

no—not rings—for Beattie, in that admirable line, lets us hear a cart going out empty in the morning—but with a *cheerful dull* sound, ploughing along the black soil, *the clean dirt* almost up to the axletree, and then, as the wheels, rimmed you might always think with silver, reach the road, macadamised till it acts like a railway, how glides along down-hill the moving mountain! And see now, the growing Stack glittering with a charge of pitchforks! The trams fly up from Dobbin's back, and a shoal of sheaves overflows the mire. Up they go, tossed from sinewy arms like feathers, and the Stack grows before your eyes, fairly proportioned as a beehive, without line or measure, but shaped by the look and the feel, true almost as the spring instinct of the nest-building bird. And are we not heartily ashamed of ourselves, amidst this general din of working mirthfulness, for having, but an hour ago, abused the jovial and generous Autumn, and thanked Heaven that he was dead? Let us retire into the barn with Shoosy, and hide our blushes.

Comparisons are odoriferous, and therefore for one paragraph let us compare Autumn with Spring. Suppose ourselves sitting beneath The Sycamore of Windermere! Poets call Spring Green-Mantle—and true it is that the groundwork of his garb is green—even like that of the proud peacock's changeful neck, when the creature treads in the circle of his own splendour, and the scholar who may have forgotten his classics, has yet a dream of Juno and of her watchful Argus

with his hundred, his thousand eyes. But the coat of Spring, like that of Joseph, is a coat of many colours. Call it patchwork if you choose,

" And be yourself the great sublime you draw."

Some people look on nature with a milliner's or a mantua-maker's eye—arraying her in furbelows and flounces. But use your own eyes and ours, and from beneath THE SYCAMORE let us two, sitting together in amity, look lovingly on the SPRING. Felt ever your heart before, with such an emotion of harmonious beauty, the exquisitely delicate distinctions of character among the lovely tribes of trees! That is BELLE ISLE. Earliest to salute the vernal rainbow, with a glow of green gentle as its own, is the lake-loving ALDER, whose home, too, is by the flowings of all the streams. Just one degree fainter in its hue—or shall we rather say brighter—for we feel the difference without knowing in what it lies—stands, by the Alder's rounded softness, the spiral LARCH, all hung over its limber sprays, were you near enough to admire them, with cones of the Tyrian dye. That stem, white as silver, and smooth as silk, seen so straight in the green sylvan light, and there airily overarching the coppice with lambent tresses, such as fancy might picture for the mermaid's hair, pleasant as is her life on that Fortunate Isle, is yet said by us, who vainly attribute our own sadness to unsorrowing things—to belong to a Tree that *weeps*,—though a weight of joy it is, and of exceeding gladness, that thus depresses the BIRCH's pendent beauty, till it droops—as we think—like that of a being overcome with grief! Seen standing all along by themselves, with something of a foreign air, and an exotic expression, yet not unwelcome or obtrusive among our indigenous fair forest-trees, twinkling to the touch of every wandering wind, and restless even amidst what seemeth now to be everlasting rest, we cannot choose but admire that somewhat darker grove of columnar Lombardy POPLARS. How comes it that some SYCAMORES so much sooner than others salute the Spring? Yonder are some but budding, as if yet the frost lay on the honey-dew that protects the beamy germs. There are others warming into expansion, half-budded and half-leaved, with a various light of colour visible in that sun-glint distinctly from afar. And in that nook of the still sunnier south, trending eastward, a few are almost in their full summer foliage, and soon will the

bees be swarming among their flowers. A Horse Chestnut has a grand oriental air, and like a satrap uplifts his green banner yellowing in the light—that shows he belongs to the line of the Prophet. Elms are then most magnificent—witness Christ-Church walk—when they hang over head in heaven like the chancel of a cathedral. Yet here, too, are the august —and methinks "a dim religious light" is in that vault of branches just vivifying to the Spring, and though almost bare, tinged with a coming hue that ere long will be majestic brightness. Those old Oaks seem sullen in the sunshine, and slow to put forth their power, like the Spirit of the Land they emblem. But they, too, are relaxing from their wonted sternness —soon will that faint green be a glorious yellow; and while the gold-laden boughs stoop boldly to the storms with which they love to dally, bounds not the heart of every Briton to the music of his national anthem,

"Rule, Britannia,
Britannia rules the waves!"

The Ash is a manly tree, but "dreigh and dour" in the leafing; and yonder stands an Ash-grove like a forest of ships with bare poles in the docks of Liverpool. Yet like the town of Kilkenny

"It shines well where it stands;"

and the bare grey-blue of the branches, apart but not repulsive, like some cunning discord in music, deepens the harmony of the Isle of Groves. Contrast is one of the finest of all the laws of association, as every philosopher, poet, and peasant kens. At this moment, it brings, by the bonds of beauty, though many glades intervene, close beside that pale grey-blue leafless Ash-Clump, that bright black-green Pine Clan, whose "leaf fadeth never," a glorious Scottish tartan triumphing in the English woods. Though many glades intervene, we said; for thou seest that Belle Isle is not all one various flush of wood, but bedropt all over—bedropt and besprinkled with grass-gems, some cloud-shadowed, some tree-shaded, some mist-bedimmed, and some luminous as small soil-suns, on which as the eye alights, it feels soothed and strengthened, and gifted with a profounder power to see into the mystery of the beauty of nature. But what are those living Hills of snow, or of some substance purer in its brightness even than any snow that fades in one night on the mountain-top! Trees are

they—fruit-trees—The Wild Cherry, that grows stately and widespreading even as the monarch of the wood—and can that be a load of blossoms! Fairer never grew before poet's eye of old in the fabled Hesperides. See how what we call snow brightens into pink—yet still the whole glory is white, and fadeth not away the purity of the balmy snow-blush. Ay, balmy as the bliss breathing from virgin lips, when, moving in the beauty left by her morning prayers, a glad fond daughter steals towards him on the feet of light, and as his arms open to receive and return the blessing, lays her innocence with smiles that are almost tears, within her father's bosom.

> "As when to those who sail
> Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
> Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
> Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
> Of Araby the Blest; with such delay
> Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league,
> Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles."

Shut your eyes—suppose five months gone—and lo! Belle Isle in Autumn, like a scene in another hemisphere of our globe. There is a slight frost in the air, in the sky, on the lake, and mid-day is as still as midnight. But, though still, it is cheerful; for close at hand Robin Redbreast—God bless him!—is warbling on the copestone of that old barn gable; and though Millar-Ground Bay is half a mile off, how distinct the clank of the two oars like one, accompanying that large wood-boat on its slow voyage from Ambleside to Bowness, the metropolitan port of the Queen of the Lakes. The water has lost, you see, its summer sunniness, yet it is as transparent as ever it was in summer; and how close together seem, with their almost meeting shadows, the two opposite shores! But we wish you to look at Belle Isle, though we ourselves are almost afraid to do so, so transcendently glorious is the sight that we know will disturb us with an emotion too deep to be endured.—Could you not think that a splendid sunset had fallen down in fragments on the Isle called Beautiful, and set it all ablaze! The woods are on fire, yet they burn not; beauty subdues while it fosters the flame; and there, as in a many-tented tabernacle, has Colour pitched his royal residence, and reigns in glory beyond that of any Oriental king. What are all the canopies, and balconies, and galleries of human state, all hung

with the richest drapery that ever the skill of Art, that Wizard, drew forth in gorgeous folds from his enchanted loom, if ideally suspended in the air of imagination beside the sun-and-storm-stained furniture of these Palaces of Autumn, framed by the Spirit of the Season, of living and dying umbrage, for his latest delight, ere he move in annual migration, with all his Court, to some foreign clime far beyond the seas! No names of trees are remembered—a glorious confusion comprehends in one the whole leafy race—orange, and purple, and scarlet, and crimson, are all seen to be there, and interfused through the silent splendour is aye felt the presence of that terrestrial green, native and unextinguishable in earth's bosom, as that celestial blue is that of the sky. That trance goes by, and the spirit, gradually filled with a stiller delight, takes down all those tents into pieces, and contemplates the encampment with less of imagination, and with more of love. It knows and blesses each one of those many glorious groves, each becoming, as it gazes, less and less glorious, more and more beautiful; till memory revives all the happiest and holiest hours of the Summer and the Spring, and re-peoples the melancholy umbrage with a thousand visions of joy, that may return never more! Images, it may be, of forms and faces now mouldering in the dust! For as human hearts have felt, and all human lips have declared—melancholy making poets of us all, ay, even prophets—till the pensive air of Autumn has been filled with the music of elegiac and foreboding hymns—as is the Race of Leaves—now old Homer speaks—so is the Race of Men! Nor till time shall have an end, insensate will be any creature endowed "with discourse of reason" to those mysterious misgivings, alternating with triumphant aspirations more mysterious still, when the Religion of Nature leans in awe on the Religion of God, and we hear the voice of both in such strains as these—the earthly, in its sadness, momentarily deadening the divine:—

> "But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn?
> Oh! when shall it dawn on the night of the grave?"

SOLILOQUY ON THE SEASONS.

SECOND RHAPSODY.

HAVE we not been speaking of all the Seasons as belonging to the masculine gender? They are generally, we believe, in this country, painted in petticoats, apparently by bagmen, as may be daily seen in the pretty prints that bedeck the paper-walls of the parlours of inns. Spring is always there represented as a spanker in a blue symar, very pertly exposing her budding breast, and her limbs from feet to fork, in a style that must be very offensive to the mealy-mouthed members of that shamefaced corporation, the Society for the Suppression of Vice. She holds a flower between her finger and her thumb, crocus, violet, or primrose; and though we verily believe she means no harm, she no doubt does look rather leeringly upon you, like one of the frail sisterhood of the Come-atables. Summer again is an enormous and monstrous mawsey, *in puris naturalibus*, meant to image Musidora, or the Medicean, or rather the Hottentot Venus.

"So stands the statue that enchants the world!"

She seems, at the very lightest, a good round half hundred heavier than Spring; and, when you imagine her plunging into the pool, you think you hear a porpus. May no Damon run away with her clothes, leaving behind in exchange his heart! Gadflies are rife in the dogdays, and should one "imparadise himself in form of that sweet flesh," there will be a cry in the woods that will speedily bring to her assistance Pan and all his Satyrs. Autumn is a motherly matron, evidently *enceinte*, and, like Love and Charity, who probably are smiling on the opposite wall, she has a brace of bouncing babies at her breast—in her right hand a formidable sickle, like a Turkish scymitar—in her left an extraordinary utensil,

bearing, we believe, the heathenish appellation of cornucopia —on her back a sheaf of wheat—and on her head a diadem—planted there by John Barleycorn. She is a fearsome dear; as ugly a customer as a lonely man would wish to encounter beneath the light of a September moon. On her feet are bauchles—on her legs huggers—and the breadth of her soles, and the thickness of her ankles, we leave to your own conjectures. Her fine bust is conspicuous in an open laced boddice —and her huge hips are set off to the biggest advantage, by a jacket that she seems to have picked up by the wayside, after some jolly tar, on his return from a long voyage, had there been performing his toilet, and, by getting rid of certain encumbrances, enabled to pursue his inland journey with less resemblance than before to a walking scarecrow. Winter is a withered old beldam, too poor to keep a cat, hurkling on her hunkers over a feeble fire of sticks, extinguished fast as it is beeted, with a fizz in the melted snow which all around that unhoused wretchedness is indurated with frost; while a blue pool close at hand is chained in iciness, and an old stump, half buried in the drift. Poor old, miserable, cowering crone! One cannot look at her without unconsciously putting one's hand in his pocket, and fumbling for a tester. Yes, there is pathos in the picture, especially while, on turning round your head, you behold a big blockhead of a vulgar bagman, with his coat-tails over his arms, warming his loathsome hideousness at a fire that would roast an ox.

Such are the Seasons! And though we have spoken of them, as mere critics on art, somewhat superciliously, yet there is almost always no inconsiderable merit in all prints, pictures, paintings, poems, or prose-works, that—pardon our tautology—are popular with the people. The emblematical figments now alluded to, have been the creations of persons of genius, who had never had access to the works of the old masters; so that, though the conception is good, the execution is, in general, far from perfect. Yet many a time, when lying at our ease in a Wayside Inn, stretched on three wooden chairs, with a little round deal-table before us, well laden with oatmeal cakes and cheese and butter, nor, you may be sure, without its "tappit hen"—have we after a long day's journey —perhaps the longest day—

"Through moors and mosses many, O,"

regarded with no imaginative spirit—when Joseph and his brethren were wanting—even such symbols of the Seasons as these—while arose to gladden us many as fair an image as ever nature sent from her woods and wildernesses to cheer the heart of her worshipper who, on his pilgrimage to her loftiest shrines, and most majestic temples, spared not to stoop his head below the lowest lintel, and held all men his equal who earned by honest industry the scanty fare which they never ate without those holy words of supplication and thanksgiving, "Give us this day our daily bread!"

Our memory is a treasure-house of written and unwritten poetry—the ingots, the gifts of the great bards, and the bars of bullion—much of the coin our own—some of it borrowed mayhap, but always on good security, and repaid with interest—a legal transaction, of which even a not unwealthy man has no need to be ashamed—none of it stolen, nor yet found where the Highlandman found the tongs. But our riches are like those that encumbered the floor of the Sanctum of the Dey of Algiers, not very tidily arranged; and we are frequently foiled in our efforts to lay our hand, for immediate use or ornament, on a ducat or a diamond, a pistole or a pearl, a sovereign, or only his crown. We feel ourselves at this moment in that predicament, when trying to recollect the genders of Thomson's "Seasons"—

> "Come, gentle Spring, ethereal mildness, come,
> And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
> While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
> Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend!"

That picture is indistinctly and obscurely beautiful to the imagination, and there is not a syllable about sex—though "ethereal mildness," which is an Impersonation, and hardly an Impersonation, must be, it is felt, a Virgin Goddess, whom all the divinities that dwell between heaven and earth must love. Never to our taste—but our taste is inferior to our feeling and our genius—though you will seldom go far wrong even in trusting it—never had a poem a more beautiful beginning. It is not simple—nor ought it to be—it is rich, and even gorgeous—for the Bard came to his subject full of inspiration; and as it was the inspiration, here, not of profound thought, but of passionate emotion, it was right that music at the very first moment

should overflow the page, and that it should be literally strewed with roses. An imperfect Impersonation is often proof positive of the highest state of poetical enthusiasm. The forms of nature undergo a half humanising process under the intensity of our love, yet still retain the character of the insensate creation, thus affecting us with a sweet, strange, almost bewildering, blended emotion that scarcely belongs to either separately, but to both together clings as to a phenomenon that only the eye of genius sees, because only the soul of genius can give it a presence—though afterwards all eyes dimly recognise it, on its being shown to them, as something more vivid than their own faint experience, yet either kindred to it, or virtually one and the same. Almost all human nature can, in some measure, understand and feel the most exquisite and recondite image which only the rarest genius could produce. Were it not so, great poets might break their harps, and go drown themselves in Helicon.

> "From brightening fields of ether fair disclosed,
> Child of the Sun, refulgent SUMMER comes,
> In pride of youth, and felt through Nature's depth:
> He comes attended by the sultry hours,
> And ever-fanning breezes, on his way;
> While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
> Averts her blushful face, and earth, and skies,
> All smiling, to his hot dominion leaves."

Here the Impersonation is stronger—and perhaps the superior strength lies in the words "child of the Sun." And here in the words describing Spring, she too is more of an Impersonation than in the other passage—averting her blushful face from the Summer's ardent look. The poet having made Summer masculine, very properly makes Spring feminine; and 'tis a jewel of a picture—for ladies should always avert their blushful faces from the ardent looks of gentlemen. Thomson, indeed, elsewhere says of an enamoured youth overpowered by the loving looks of his mistress,—

> "From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
> Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
> With sighing languishment."

This, we have heard, from experienced persons of both sexes, is as delicate as it is natural; but for our own simple

and single selves, we never remember having got sick on any such occasion. Much agitated, we cannot deny—if we did, the most credulous would not credit us—much agitated we have been, when our lady-love, not contented with fixing upon us her dove-eyes, began billing and cooing in a style from which the cushat might have taken a lesson with advantage, that she might the better perform her innocent part on her first assignation with her affianced in the pine-grove on St Valentine's day; but never in all our long lives got we absolutely *sick*—nor even *squeamish*—never were we obliged to turn away with our hand to our mouth—but, on the contrary, we were commonly as brisk as a bee at a pot of honey; or, if that be too luscious a simile, as brisk as that same wonderful insect murmuring for a few moments round and round a rose-bush, and then settling himself down seriously to work, as mute as a mouse, among the half-blown petals. However, we are not now writing our Confessions—and what we wished to say about this passage is, that in it the one sex is represented as turning away the face from that of the other, which may be all natural enough, though polite on the gentleman's part we can never call it; and, had the female virgin done so, we cannot help thinking it would have read better in poetry. But for Spring to avert *his* blushful face from the ardent looks of Summer, has on us the effect of making both Seasons seem simpletons. Spring, in the character of "ethereal mildness," was unquestionably a female; but here she is "unsexed from the crown to the toe," and changed into an awkward hobbletehoy, who, having passed his boyhood in the country, is a booby who blushes black at the gaze of his own brother, and if brought into the company of the lasses, would not fail to faint away in a fit, nor revive till his face felt a pitcherful of cold water.

> "Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
> While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
> Comes jovial on," &c.,

is, we think, bad. The Impersonation here is complete, and though the sex of Autumn is not mentioned, it is manifestly meant to be male. So far, there is nothing amiss either one way or another. But "nodding o'er the yellow plain" is a mere statement of a fact in nature—and descriptive of the

growing and ripening or ripened harvest—whereas it is applied here to Autumn, as a figure who "comes jovial on." This is not obscurity—or indistinctness—which, as we have said before, is often a great beauty in Impersonation; but it is an inconsistency and a contradiction—and therefore indefensible on any ground either of conception or expression.

"There are no such essential vices as this in the "Castle of Indolence"—for by that time Thomson had subjected his inspiration to thought—and his poetry, guided and guarded by philosophy, became celestial as an angel's song.

"See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,
Vapours, and clouds, and storms. Be these my theme,
These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nursed by careless Solitude I lived,
And sung of Nature with unceasing joy,
Pleased have I wander'd through your rough domain;
Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrents burst;
Or seen the deep-fermenting tempest brew'd
In the grim evening sky. Thus passed the time,
Till through the lucid chambers of the south
Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out, and smiled!"

Divine inspiration indeed! Poetry, that if read by the bedside of a dying lover of nature, might

"Create a soul
Under the ribs of death!"

What in the name of goodness makes us suppose that a mean and miserable November day, even while we are thus Rhapsodising, is drizzling all Edinburgh with the worst of all imaginable Scottish mists—an Easterly Haur? We know that he infests all the year, but shows his poor spite in its bleakest bitterness in March and in November. Earth and heaven are not only not worth looking at in an Easterly Haur, but the Visible is absolute wretchedness, and people wonder why they were born. The visitation begins with a sort of characterless haze, waxing more and more wetly obscure, till you know not whether it be rain, snow, or sleet, that drenches

your clothes in dampness, till you feel it in your skin, then in your flesh, then in your bones, then in your marrow, and then in your mind. Your blinking eyes have it too—and so, shut it as you will, has your moping mouth. Yet the streets, though looking blue, are not puddled, and the dead cat lies dry in the gutter. There is no eavesdropping—no gushing of waterspouts. To say it rained would be no breach of veracity, but a mere misstatement of a melancholy fact. The truth is, that *the weather cannot rain*, but keeps spit, spit, spitting, in a style sufficient to irritate Socrates—or even Moses himself; and yet true, veritable, sincere, genuine, and authentic Rain could not—or if he could would not—so thoroughly soak you and your whole wardrobe, were you to allow him a day to do it, as that shabby imitation of a tenth-rate shower, in about the time of a usual sized sermon. So much cold and so much wet, with so little to show for it, is a disgrace to the atmosphere, which it will take weeks of the sunniest the weather can afford to wipe off. But the stores of sunniness which it is in the power of Winter in this northern latitude to accumulate, cannot be immense; and therefore we verily belive that it would be too much to expect that it ever can make amends for the hideous horrors of this Easterly Haur. The Cut-throat!

On such days suicides rush to judgment. That sin is mysterious as insanity—their graves are unintelligible as the cells in Bedlam. Oh! the brain and the heart of man! Therein is the only Hell. Small these regions in space, and of narrow room—but haunted may they be with all the Fiends and all the Furies. A few nerves transmit to the soul despair or bliss. At the touch of something—whence and wherefore sent, who can say—something that serenes or troubles, soothes or jars—she soars up into life and light, just as you may have seen a dove suddenly cleave the sunshine—or down she dives into death and darkness, like a shot eagle tumbling into the sea!

Materialism! Immaterialism! Why should mortals, whom conscience tells that they are immortals, bewildered and bewildering ponder upon the dust! Do your duty to God and man, and fear not that, when that dust dies, the spirit that breathed by it will live for ever. Feels not that spirit its immortality in each sacred thought? When did ever reli-

gious soul fear annihilation? Or shudder to think that, having once known, it could ever forget God? Such forgetfulness is in the idea of eternal death. Therefore is eternal death impossible to us who can hold communion with our Maker. Our knowledge of Him—dim and remote though it be—is a God-given pledge that He will redeem us from the doom of the grave.

Let us then, and all our friends, believe, with Coleridge, in his beautiful poem of the "Nightingale," that

"In Nature there is nothing melancholy,"

not even November. The disease of the body may cause disease in the soul; yet not the less trust we in the mercy of the merciful—not the less strive we to keep feeding and trimming that spiritual lamp which is within us, even when it flickers feebly in the dampy gloom, like an earthly lamp left in a vaulted sepulchre, about to die among the dead. Heaven seems to have placed a power in our Will as mighty as it is mysterious. Call it not Liberty, lest you should wax proud; call it not Necessity, lest you should despair. But turn from the oracles of man—still dim even in their clearest responses—to the Oracles of God, which are never dark; or if so, but

"Dark with excessive bright"

to eyes not constantly accustomed to sustain the splendour. Bury all your books, when you feel the night of scepticism gathering around you—bury them all, powerful though you may have deemed their spells to illuminate the unfathomable—open your Bible, and all the spiritual world will be as bright as day.

The disease of the body may cause disease to the soul. Ay, madness. Some rapture in the soul makes the brain numb, and thence sudden or lingering death;—some rupture in the brain makes the soul insane, and thence life worse than death, and haunted by horrors beyond what is dreamt of the grave and all its corruption. Perhaps the line fullest of meaning that ever was written, is—

"Mens sana in corpore sano."

When nature feels the flow of its vital blood pure and unimpeded, what unutterable gladness bathes the spirit in that one feeling of—health! Then the mere consciousness of

existence is like that emotion which Milton speaks of as breathed from the bowers of Paradise—

> "Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
> All sadness but despair"

It does more—for despair itself cannot prevail against it. What a dawn of bliss rises upon us with the dawn of light, when our life is healthful as the sun! Then

> "It feels that it is greater than it knows."

God created the earth and the air beautiful through the senses; and at the uplifting of a little lid, a whole flood of imagery is let in upon the spirit, all of which becomes part of its very self, as if the enjoying and the enjoyed were one. Health flies away like an angel, and her absence disenchants the earth. What shadows then pass over the ethereal surface of the spirit, from the breath of disordered matter!—from the first scarcely-felt breath of despondency, to the last scowling blackness of despair! Often men know not what power placed the fatal fetters upon them—they see even that a link may be open, and that one effort might fling off the bondage; but their souls are in slavery, and will not be free. Till something like a fresh wind, or a sudden sunbeam, comes across them, and in a moment their whole existence is changed, and they see the very vanishing of their most dismal and desperate dream.

"Somewhat too much of this"—so let us strike the chords to a merrier measure—to a "livelier lilt"—as suits the variable spirit of our Soliloquy. Be it observed, then, that the sole certain way of getting rid of the blue devils, is to drown them in a shower-bath. You would not suppose that we are subject to the blue devils? Yet we are sometimes their very slave. When driven to it by their lash, every occupation, which when free we resort to as pastime, becomes taskwork; nor will these dogged masters suffer us to purchase emancipation with the proceeds of the toil of our groaning genius. But whenever the worst comes to the worst, and we almost wish to die so that we might escape the galling pressure of our chains, we sport buff, and into the shower-bath. Yet such is the weakness of poor human nature, that like a criminal on the scaffold, shifting the signal kerchief from hand

to hand, much to the irritation of his excellency the hangman, one of the most impatient of men—and more to the satisfaction of the crowd, the most patient of men and women—we often stand shut up in that sentry-looking canvass box, dexterously and sinistrously fingering the string, perhaps for five shrinking, and shuddering, and *grueing* minutes, ere we can summon up desperation to pull down upon ourselves the rushing waterfall! Soon as the agony is over, we bounce out the colour of beetroot, and survey ourselves in a five-foot mirror, with an amazement that, on each successive exhibition, is still as fresh as when we first experienced it,

"In life's morning march, when our spirits were young."

By-and-by we assume the similitude of an immense boiled lobster that has leapt out of the pan—and then, seeming for a while to be an emblematical or symbolical representation of the setting Sun, we sober down into a faint pink, like that of the Morn, and finally subside into our own permanent flesh-light, which, as we turn our back upon ourselves, after the fashion of some of his majesty's ministers, reminds us of that line in Cowper descriptive of the November Moon—

"Resplendent less, but of an ampler round!"

Like that of the eagle, our youth is renewed—we feel strong as the horse in Homer—a divine glow permeates our being, as if it were the subdued spiritual essence of caloric. An intense feeling of self—not self-love, mind ye, and the farthest state imaginable in this wide world from selfishness—elevates us far up above the clouds, into the loftiest regions of the sunny blue, and we seem to breathe an atmosphere, of which every glorious gulp is inspiration. Despondency is thrown to the dogs. Despair appears in his true colours, a more grotesque idiot than Grimaldi, and we treat him with a guffaw. All ante-bath difficulties seem now—what they really are—facilities of which we are by far too much elated to avail ourselves; dangers that used to appear appalling are felt now to be lulling securities—obstacles, like mountains, lying in our way of life as we walked towards the temple of Apollo or Plutus, we smile at the idea of surmounting, so molehillish do they look, and we kick them aside like an old footstool. Let the country

ask us for a scheme to pay off the national debt—*there she has it;* do you request us to have the kindness to leap over the moon—here we go; excellent Mr Blackwood has but to say the word, and a ready-made Leading Article is in his hand, promotive of the sale of countless numbers of "my Magazine," and of the happiness of countless numbers of mankind. We feel—and the feeling proves the fact—as bold as Joshua the son of Nun—as brave as David the son of Jesse—as wise as Solomon the son of David—and as proud as Nebuchadnezzar the son of Nebopolazzar. We survey our image in the mirror—and think of Adam. We put ourselves into the posture of the Belvidere Apollo.

> Then view the Lord of the unerring bow,
> The God of life, and poesy, and light,
> The Sun in human arms array'd, and brow
> All radiant from his triumph in the fight.
> The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright
> With an immortal vengeance; in his eye
> And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
> And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
> Developing in that one glance the Deity."

Up four flight of stairs we fly—for the bath is in the double-sunk story—ten steps at a bound—and in five minutes have devoured one quartern loaf, six eggs, and a rizzar, washing all over with a punch-bowl of congou and a tea-bowl of coffee.

> "Enormous breakfast,
> Wild without rule or art! Where nature plays
> Her virgin fancies."

And then, leaning back on our Easy-chair, we perform an exploit beyond the reach of Euclid—why, WE SQUARE THE CIRCLE, and to the utter demolition of our admirable friend Sir David Brewster's diatribe, in a late number of the *Quarterly Review*, on the indifference of Government to men of science, chuckle over our nobly-won order K.C.C.B., Knight Companion of the Cold Bath.

Many analogies between the seasons of the year and the seasons of life, being natural, have been a frequent theme of poetry in all countries. Had the gods made us poetical, we

should now have poured forth a few exquisite illustrations of some that are very affecting and impressive. It has, however, often been felt by us, that not a few of those one meets with in the lamentations of whey-faced sentimentalists, are false or fantastic, and do equal violence to all the seasons, both of the year and of life. These gentry have been especially silly upon the similitude of Old Age to Winter. Winter, in external nature, is not the season of decay. An old tree, for example, in the very *dead* of winter, as it is figuratively called, though bare of leaves, is full of life. The sap, indeed, has sunk down from his bole and branches—down into his toes or roots. But there it is, ready, in due time, to reascend. Not so with an old man—the present company always excepted;—his sap is not sunk down to his toes, but much of it is gone clean out of the system—therefore, individual natural objects in Winter are not analogically emblematical of people stricken in years. Far less does the Winter itself of the year, considered as a season, resemble the old age of life considered as a season. To what peculiarities, pray, in the character and conduct of aged gentlemen in general, do rain, sleet, hail, frost, ice, snow, winds, blasts, storms, hurricanes, and occasional thunder and lightning, bear analogy? We pause for a reply. Old men's heads, it is true, are frequently white, though more frequently bald, and their blood is not so hot as when they were springalds. But though there be no great harm in likening a sprinkling of white hair on mine ancient's temples to the appearance of the surface of the earth, flat or mountainous, after a slight fall of snow—and indeed, in an impassioned state of mind, we feel a moral beauty in such poetical expression as "sorrow shedding on the head of youth its untimely snows"—yet the natural propriety of such an image, so far from justifying the assertion of a general analogy between Winter and Old Age, proves that the analogies between them are in fact very few, and felt to be analogies at all, only when touched upon very seldom, and very slightly, and, for the most part, very vaguely—the truth being, that they scarcely exist at all in reality, but have an existence given to them by the power of creative passion, which often works like genius. Shakespeare knew this well—as he knew everything else; and, accordingly, he gives us Seven Ages of Life—not Four Seasons. But how finely does he sometimes, by the mere use of the names of the

Seasons of the Year, intensify to our imagination the mental state to which they are for the moment felt to be analogous?—

> "Now is the winter of our discontent
> Made glorious summer by the sun of York!"

That will do. The feeling he wished to inspire, is inspired; and the further analogical images which follow add nothing to *our* feeling, though they show the strength and depth of *his* into whose lips they are put. A bungler would have bored us with ever so many ramifications of the same idea, on one of which, in our weariness, we might have wished him hanged by the neck till he was dead.

We are an Old Man, and though single not singular; yet, without vanity, we think ourselves entitled to say, that we are no more like Winter, in particular, than we are like Spring, Summer, or Autumn. The truth is, that we are much less like any one of the Seasons, than we are like the whole Set. Is not Spring sharp? So are we. Is not Spring snappish? So are we. Is not Spring boisterous? So are we. Is not Spring "beautiful exceedingly?" So are we. Is not Spring capricious? So are we. Is not Spring, at times, the gladdest, gayest, gentlest, mildest, meekest, modestest, softest, sweetest, and sunniest of all God's creatures that steal along the face of the earth? So are we. So much for our similitude—a staring and striking one—to Spring. But were you to stop there, what an inadequate idea would you have of our character! For only ask your senses, and they will tell you that we are much liker Summer. Is not Summer often infernally hot? So are we. Is not Summer sometimes cool as its own cucumbers? So are we. Does not Summer love the shade? So do we. Is not Summer, nevertheless, somewhat "too much i' the sun?" So are we. Is not Summer famous for its thunder and lightning? So are we. Is not Summer, when he chooses, still, silent, and serene as a sleeping seraph? And so too—when Christopher chooses—are not we? Though, with keen remorse we confess it, that, when suddenly wakened, we are too often more like a fury or a fiend—and that completes the likeness; for all who know a Scottish Summer, with one voice exclaim—"So is he!" But our portrait is but half-drawn; you know but a moiety of our character. Is Autumn jovial?—ask Thomson—so are we. Is Autumn melancholy?—ask Alison and Gil-

lespie—so are we. Is Autumn bright?—ask the woods and groves—so are we. Is Autumn rich?—ask the whole world—so are we. Does Autumn rejoice in the yellow grain and the golden vintage, that, stored up in his great Magazine of Nature, are lavishly thence dispensed to all that hunger, and quench the thirst of the nations? So do we. After that, no one can be so pur-and-bat-blind as not see that North is, in very truth, Autumn's gracious self, rather than his Likeness or Eidolon. But—

"Lo, Winter comes to rule th' inverted year!"

So do we.

"Sullen and sad, with all his rising train—
Vapours, and clouds, and storms!"

So are we. The great author of the "Seasons" says, that Winter and his train

"Exalt the soul to solemn thought,
And heavenly musing!"

So do we. And, "lest aught less great should stamp us mortal," here we conclude the comparison, dashed off in few lines by the hand of a great master, and ask, Is not North, Winter? Thus, listener after our own heart! thou feelest that we are imaged aright in all our attributes neither by Spring, nor Summer, nor Autumn, nor Winter; but that the character of Christopher is shadowed forth and reflected by the Entire Year.

A FEW WORDS ON THOMSON.

Poetry, one might imagine, must be full of Snow-scenes. If so, they have almost all dissolved—melted away from our memory—as the transiencies in nature do which they coldly pictured. Thomson's "Winter," of course, we do not include in our obliviousness—and from Cowper's "Task" we might quote many a most picturesque Snow-piece. But have frost and snow been done full justice to by them or any other of our poets? They have been well spoken of by two—Southey and Coleridge—of whose most poetical compositions respectively, "Thalaba" and the "Ancient Mariner," in some future volume we may dissert. Thomson's genius does not so often delight us by exquisite minute touches in the description of nature as that of Cowper. It loves to paint on a great scale, and to dash objects off sweepingly by bold strokes—such, indeed, as have almost always distinguished the mighty masters of the lyre and the rainbow. Cowper sets nature before your eyes—Thomson before your imagination. Which do you prefer? Both. Be assured that both poets had pored night and day upon her—in all her aspects—and that she had revealed herself fully to both. But they, in their religion, elected different modes of worship—and both were worthy of the mighty mother. In one mood of mind we love Cowper best, in another Thomson. Sometimes the Seasons are almost a Task—and sometimes the Task is out of Season. There is delightful distinctness in all the pictures of the Bard of Olney—glorious gloom or glimmer in most of those of the Bard of Ednam. Cowper paints trees—Thomson woods. Thomson paints, in a few wondrous lines, rivers from source to sea, like the mighty Burrampooter—Cowper, in many no very wondrous lines, brightens up one bend of a stream, or awakens our fancy to the murmur of some single waterfall. But a truce to anti-

thesis—a deceptive style of criticism—and see how Thomson sings of Snow. Why, in the following lines, as well as Christopher North in his Soliloquy on the Seasons—

> "The cherish'd fields
> Put on their winter-robe of purest white.
> 'Tis brightness all; save where the new snow melts
> Along the mazy current."

Nothing can be more vivid. 'Tis of the nature of an ocular spectrum.

Here is a touch like one of Cowper's. Note the beauty of the epithet "brown," where all that is motionless is white—

> "The foodless wilds
> Pour forth their *brown* inhabitants."

That one word proves the poet. Does it not?

The entire description from which these two sentences are selected by memory—a critic you may always trust to—is admirable; except in one or two places where Thomson seems to have striven to be strongly pathetic, and where he seems to us to have overshot his mark, and to have ceased to be perfectly natural. Thus—

> "Drooping, the ox
> Stands cover'd o'er with snow, and then demands
> The fruit of all his toil."

The image of the ox is as good as possible. We see him, and could paint him in oils. But, to our mind, the notion of his "demanding the fruit of all his toils"—to which we freely acknowledge the worthy animal was well entitled—sounds, as it is here expressed, rather fantastical. Call it doubtful—for Jemmy was never utterly in the wrong in any sentiment. Again—

> "The bleating kind
> Eye the bleak heaven, and next the glistening earth,
> *With looks of dumb despair.*"

The second line is perfect; but the Ettrick Shepherd agreed with us—one night at Ambrose's—that the third was not quite right. Sheep, he agreed with us, do not deliver themselves up to despair under any circumstances; and here Thomson transferred what would have been his own feeling

in a corresponding condition, to animals who dreadlessly follow their instincts. Thomson redeems himself in what immediately succeeds—

> "Then, sad dispersed,
> Dig for the wither'd herb through heaps of snow."

For, as they disperse, they do look very sad—and no doubt are so; but had they been in despair, they would not so readily, and constantly, and uniformly, and successfully, have taken to the digging, but whole flocks had perished.

You will not, we are confident, be angry with us for quoting a few lines that occur soon after, and which are a noble example of the sweeping style of description which, we said above, characterises the genius of this sublime poet:—

> "From the bellowing east,
> In this dire season, oft the whirlwind's wing
> Sweeps up the burden of whole wintry plains
> At one wide waft, and o'er the hapless flocks,
> Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
> The billowy tempest whelms; till, upward urged,
> The valley to a shining mountain swells,
> Tipp'd with a wreath high-curling in the sky."

Well might the Bard, with such a snow-storm in his imagination, when telling the shepherds to be kind to their helpless charge, addressed them in language which, in an ordinary mood, would have been bombast. "Shepherds," says he, "baffle the raging year!" How? Why merely by filling their pens with food. But the whirlwind was up—

> "Far off its coming *groan'd*,"

and the poet was inspired. Had he not been so, he had not cried, "Baffle the raging year;" and if you be not so, you will think it a most absurd expression.

Did you ever see water beginning to change itself into ice? Yes. Then try to describe the sight. Success in that trial will prove you a poet. People do not prove themselves poets only by writing long poems. A line—two words—may show that they are the Muse's sons. How exquisitely does Burns picture to our eyes moonlight water undergoing an ice-change!

> "The chilly frost beneath the silver beam,
> Crept, gently crusting o'er the glittering stream!"

Thomson does it with an almost finer spirit of perception—or conception—or memory—or whatever else you choose to call it; for our part, we call it genius—

> "An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
> *Breathes a blue film*, and in its mid career
> Arrests the bickering stream."

And afterwards, having frozen the entire stream into a "crystal pavement," how strongly doth he conclude thus—

> "*The whole imprison'd river growls below.*"

Here, again, 'tis pleasant to see the peculiar genius of Cowper contrasted with that of Thomson. The gentle Cowper delighting, for the most part, in tranquil images—for his life was passed amidst tranquil nature; the enthusiastic Thomson, more pleased with images of power. Cowper says—

> "On the flood,
> Indurated and fixed, the snowy weight
> Lies undissolved, *while silently beneath,*
> *And unperceived, the current steals away.*"

How many thousand times the lines we are now going to quote have been quoted, nobody can tell; but we quote them once more for the purpose of asking you, if you think that any one poet of this age could have written them—could have chilled one's very blood with such intense feeling of cold! Not one.

> "In these fell regions, in Arzina caught,
> *And to the stony deep his idle ship*
> *Immediate seal'd*, he with his hapless crew,
> Each full exerted at his several task,
> *Froze into statues; to the cordage glued*
> *The sailor, and the pilot to the helm!*"

The oftener—the more we read the "Winter"—especially the last two or three hundred lines—the angrier is our wonder with Wordsworth for asserting that Thomson owed the national popularity that his "Winter" immediately won, to his "commonplace sentimentalities, and his vicious style!" Yet true it is, that he was sometimes guilty of both; and, but for his transcendent genius, they might have obscured the lustre of his

fame. But such sins are not very frequent in the "Seasons," and were all committed in the glow of that fine and bold enthusiasm, which to his imagination arrayed all things, and all words, in a light that seemed to him at the time to be poetry—though sometimes it was but "false glitter." Admitting, then, that sometimes the style of the "Seasons" is somewhat too florid, we must not criticise single and separate passages, without holding in mind the character of the poet's genius and his inspirations. He luxuriates—he revels—he wantons—at once with an imaginative and a sensuous delight in nature. Besides, he was but young; and his great work was his first. He had not philosophised his poetical language, as Wordsworth himself has done, after long years of profoundest study of the laws of thought and speech. But in such study, while much is gained, may not something be lost? And is there not a charm in the free, flowing, chartered libertinism of the diction and versification of the "Seasons"—above all, in the closing strains of the "Winter," and in the whole of the "Hymn," which inspires a delight and wonder seldom breathed upon us—glorious poem, on the whole, as it is—from the more measured march of the "Excursion?"

All those children of the Pensive Public who have been much at school, know Thomson's description of the wolves among the Alps, Apennines, and Pyrenees,

> "Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
> Burning for blood, bony and gaunt and grim!" &c.

The first fifteen lines are equal to anything in the whole range of English descriptive poetry; but the last ten are positively bad. Here they are:—

> "The godlike face of man avails him nought!
> Even beauty, force divine! at whose bright glance
> The generous lion stands in soften'd gaze,
> Now bleeds, a hapless undistinguish'd prey.
> But if, apprised of the severe attack,
> The country be shut up, lured by the scent,
> On churchyard drear (inhuman to relate!)
> The disappointed prowlers fall, and dig
> The shrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
> Mix'd with foul shades and frighted ghosts, they howl."

Wild beasts do not like the look of the human eye—they

think us ugly customers—and sometimes stand shilly-shallying in our presence, in an awkward but alarming attitude, of hunger mixed with fear. A single wolf seldom or never attacks a man. He cannot stand the face. But a person would need to have a godlike face indeed to terrify therewith an army of wolves some thousand strong. It would be the height of presumption in any man, though beautiful as Moore thought Byron, to attempt it. If so, then

"The godlike face of man avails him nought,"

is, under the circumstances, ludicrous. Still more so is the trash about "beauty, force divine!" It is too much to expect of an army of wolves some thousand strong, "and hungry as the grave," that they should all fall down on their knees before a sweet morsel of flesh and blood, merely because the young lady was so beautiful that she might have sat to Sir Thomas Lawrence for a frontispiece to Mr Watts's "Souvenir." 'Tis all stuff, too, about the generous lion standing in softened gaze at beauty's bright glance. True, he has been known to look with a certain sort of soft surliness upon a pretty Caffre girl, and to walk past without eating her—but simply because, an hour or two before, he had dined on a Hottentot Venus. The secret lay not in his heart, but in his stomach. Still the notion is a popular one, and how exquisitely has Spenser changed it into the divinest poetry in the character of the attendant lion of

"Heavenly Una, with her milk-white lamb!"

But Thomson, so far from making poetry of it in this passage, has vulgarised and blurred by it the natural and inevitable emotion of terror and pity. Famished wolves *howking* up the dead is a dreadful image—but "*inhuman to relate*," is not an expression heavily laden with meaning; and the sudden, abrupt, violent, and, as we feel, unnatural introduction of ideas purely superstitious, at the close, is revolting, and miserably mars the terrible *truth*.

"Mix'd with foul shades and frighted ghosts, they howl."

Why, pray, are the shades foul, and the ghosts only frightened? And wherein lies the specific difference between a shade and a ghost? Besides, if the ghosts were frightened, which

they had good reason to be, why were not they off? We have frequently read of their wandering far from home, on occasions when they had no such excellent excuse to offer. This line, therefore, we have taken the liberty to erase from our pocket-copy of the "Seasons"—and to draw a few keelavine strokes over the rest of the passage—beginning with "man's godlike face."

Go read, then, the opening of "Winter," and acknowledge that, of all climates and all countries, there are none within any of the zones of the earth that will bear a moment's comparison with those of Scotland. Forget the people if you can, and think only of the region. The lovely Lowlands undulating away into the glorious Highlands—the spirit of sublimity and the spirit of beauty one and the same, as it blends them in indissoluble union. Bury us alive in the dungeon's gloom—incommunicable with the light of day as the grave—it could not seal our eyes to the sight of Scotland. We should see it still by rising or by setting suns. Whatever blessed scene we chose to call on would become an instant apparition. Nor in that thick-ribbed vault would our eyes be deaf to her rivers and her seas. We should say our prayers to their music, and to the voice of the thunder on a hundred hills. We stand now in no need of senses. They are waxing dim—but our spirit may continue to brighten long as the light of love is allowed to dwell therein, thence proceeding over nature like a victorious morn.

There are many beautiful passages in the poets about RAIN; but who ever sang its advent so passionately as in these strains?—

> "The effusive south
> Warms the wide air, and o'er the void of heaven
> Breathes the big clouds with vernal showers distent.
> At first a dusky wreath they seem to rise,
> Scarce staining ether; but by swift degrees,
> In heaps on heaps, the doubling vapour sails
> Along the loaded sky, and mingling deep
> Sits on th' horizon round a settled gloom:
> Not such as wintry storms on mortals shed,
> Oppressing life; but lovely, gentle, kind,
> And full of every hope and every joy,
> The wish of nature. Gradual sinks the breeze
> Into a perfect calm, that not a breath

Is heard to quiver through the closing woods,
Or rustling turn the many-twinkling leaves
Of aspen tall. Th' uncurling floods diffused
In glassy breadth, seem through delusive lapse
Forgetful of their course. 'Tis silence all
And pleasing expectation. Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploring, eye
The falling verdure!"

All that follows is, you know, as good—better it cannot be—till we come to the close, the perfection of poetry, and then sally out into the shower, and join the hymn of earth to heaven—

"The stealing shower is scarce to patter heard
By such as wander through the forest walks,
Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the shade, while heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap?
Swift Fancy fired anticipates their growth;
And, while the milky nutriment distils,
Beholds the kindling country colour round."

Thomson, they say, was too fond of epithets. Not he, indeed. Strike out one of the many there—and your sconce shall feel the crutch. A poet less conversant with nature would have feared to say, "sits on the horizon round *a settled gloom*," or rather, he would not have seen or thought it was a settled gloom; and, therefore, he could not have said—

——"But lovely, gentle, kind,
And full of every hope and every joy,
The wish of Nature."

Leigh Hunt—most vivid of poets, and most cordial of critics—somewhere finely speaks of a ghastly line in a poem of Keats'—

"Riding to Florence with the murder'd man;"

that is, the man about to be murdered—imagination conceiving as one, doom and death. Equally great are the words—

"Herds and flocks
Drop the dry sprig, and, mute-imploring, eye
The falling verdure."

The verdure is seen in the shower—to be the very shower —by the poet at least—perhaps by the cattle, in their thirsty hunger forgetful of the brown ground, and swallowing the dropping herbage. The birds had not been so sorely distressed by the drought as the beasts, and therefore the poet speaks of them, not as relieved from misery, but as visited with gladness—

> "Hush'd in short suspense,
> The plumy people streak their wings with oil,
> To throw the lucid moisture trickling off,
> And wait th' approaching sign, to strike, at once,
> Into the general choir."

Then, and not till then, the *humane* poet bethinks him of the insensate earth—insensate not; for beast and bird being satisfied, and lowing and singing in their gratitude, so do the places of their habitation yearn for the blessing—

> "E'en mountains, vales,
> And forests, seem impatient, to demand
> The promised sweetness."

The *religious* Poet then speaks for his kind—and says devoutly—

> "Man superior walks
> Amid the glad creation, musing praise,
> And looking lively gratitude."

In that mood he is justified to feast his fancy with images of the beauty as well as the bounty of nature; and genius in one line has concentrated them all—

> "Beholds the kindling country colour round."

'Tis "an a' day's rain"—and "the well-showered earth is deep-enriched with vegetable life." And what kind of an evening? We have seen many such—and every succeeding one more beautiful, more glorious to our eyes than another—because of these words in which the beauty and the glory of one and all are enshrined—

> "Till, in the western sky, the downward sun
> Looks out, effulgent, from amid the flush
> Of broken clouds, gay-shifting to his beam.
> The rapid radiance, instantaneous, strikes

Th' illumined mountain, through the forest streams,
Shakes on the floods, and in a yellow mist,
Far smoking o'er th' interminable plain,
In twinkling myriads lights the dewy gems.
Moist, bright, and green, the landscape laughs around.
Full swell the woods; their every music wakes,
Mix'd in wild concert with the warbling brooks
Increased, the distant bleatings of the hills,
And hollow lows responsive from the vales,
Whence, blending all, the sweeten'd zephyr springs.
Meantime, refracted from yon eastern cloud,
Bestriding earth, the grand ethereal bow
Shoots up immense; and every hue unfolds
In fair proportion, running from the red
To where the violet fades into the sky."

How do you like our recitation of that surpassing strain? Every shade of feeling should have its shade of sound—every pause its silence. But these must all come and go, untaught, unbidden, from the fulness of the heart. Then indeed, and not till then, can words be said to be set to music—*to a celestial sing-song.*

The mighty Minstrel recited old Ballads with a warlike march of sound that made one's heart leap, while his usually sweet smile was drawn in, and disappeared among the glooms that sternly gathered about his lowering brows, and gave his whole aspect a most heroic character. Rude verses, that from ordinary lips would have been almost meaningless, from his came inspired with passion. Sir Philip Sidney, who said that "Chevy Chase" roused him like the sound of a trumpet, had he heard Sir Walter Scott recite it, would have gone distracted. Yet the "best judges" said he murdered his own poetry—we say about as much as Homer. Wordsworth recites his own Poetry (catch him reciting any other) magnificently—while his eyes seem blind to all outward objects, like those of a somnambulist. Coleridge was the sweetest of sing-songers—and his silver voice "warbled melody." Next to theirs, we believe our own recitation of Poetry to be the most impressive heard in modern times, though we cannot deny that the leathern-eared have pronounced it detestable, and the long-eared ludicrous; their delight being in what is called Elocution, as it is taught by player-folk.

O friendly reader of these our Recreations! thou needst not

to be told—yet in love let us tell thee—that there are a thousand ways of dealing in description with Nature, so as to make her poetical; but sentiment there always must be, else it is stark nought. You may infuse the sentiment by a single touch—by a ray of light no thicker, nor one thousandth part so thick, as the finest needle ever silk-threaded by lady's finger; or you may dance it in with a flutter of sunbeams; or you may splash it in as with a gorgeous cloud-stain stolen from sunset; or you may bathe it in with a shred of the rainbow. Perhaps the highest power of all possessed by the sons of song, is to breathe it in with the breath, to let it slip in with the light of the common day!

Then some poets there are, who show you a scene all of a sudden, by means of a few magical words—just as if you opened your eyes at their bidding—and in place of a blank, a world. Others, again, as good and as great, create their world gradually before your eyes, for the delight of your soul, that loves to gaze on the growing glory; but delight is lost in wonder, and you know that they, too, are warlocks. Some heap image upon image, piles of imagery on piles of imagery, as if they were ransacking and robbing, and red-reavering earth, sea, and sky; yet all things there are consentaneous with one grand design, which, when consummated, is a Whole that seems to typify the universe. Others give you but fragments—but such as awaken imaginations of beauty and of power transcendent, like that famous Torso. And some show you Nature glimmering beneath a veil which, nunlike, she has religiously taken; and then call not Nature ideal only in that holy twilight, for then it is that she is spiritual, and we who belong to her feel that we shall live for ever.

Thus—and in other wondrous ways—the great poets are the great painters, and so are they the great musicians. But how they are so, some other time may we tell; suffice it now to say, that as we listen to the mighty masters—"sole or responsive to each other's voice"—

> "Now, 'tis like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely lute;
> And now 'tis like an angel's song
> That bids the heavens be mute!"

Why will so many myriads of men and women, denied by

nature "the vision and the faculty divine," persist in the delusion that they are poetising, while they are but versifying "this bright and breathing world?" They see truly not even the outward objects of sight. But of all the rare affinities and relationships in Nature, visible or audible to Fine-ear-and-Far-eye the Poet, not a whisper—not a glimpse have they ever heard or seen, any more than had they been born deaf-blind.

They paint a landscape, but nothing "prates of their whereabouts," while they were sitting on a tripod, with their paper on their knees, drawing—their breath. For, in the front ground is a castle, against which, if you offer to stir a step, you infallibly break your head, unless providentially stopped by that extraordinary vegetable-looking substance, perhaps a tree, growing bolt upright out of an intermediate stone, that has wedged itself in long after there had ceased to be even standing-room in that strange theatre of nature. But down from "the swelling instep of a mountain's foot," that has protruded itself through a wood, while the body of the mountain prudently remains in the extreme distance, descends on you, ere you have recovered from your unexpected encounter with the old Roman cement, an unconscionable cataract. There stands a deer or goat, or rather some beast with horns, "strictly anonymous," placed for effect, contrary to all cause, in a place where it seems as uncertain how he got in as it is certain that he never can get out till he becomes a hippogriff.

The true poet, again, has such potent eyes, that when he lets down the lids, he sees just as well, perhaps better than when they were up; for in that deep, earnest, inward gaze, the fluctuating sea of scenery subsides into a settled calm, where all is harmony as well as beauty—order as well as peace. What though he have been fated, through youth and manhood, to dwell in city smoke? His childhood—his boyhood—were overhung with trees, and through its heart went the murmur of waters. Then it is, we verily believe, that in all poets, is filled with images up to the brim, Imagination's treasury. Genius, growing, and grown up to maturity, is still a prodigal. But he draws on the Bank of Youth. His bills, whether at a short or long date, are never dishonoured; nay, made payable at sight, they are as good as gold. Nor cares that Bank for a run, made even in a panic, for besides bars and billets, and

wedges and blocks of gold, there are, unappreciable beyond the riches which against a time of trouble

"The Sultaun hides in his ancestral tombs,"

jewels and diamonds sufficient

"To ransom great kings from captivity."

We sometimes think that the power of painting Nature to the life, whether in her real or ideal beauty (both belong to *life*,) is seldom evolved to its utmost, until the mind possessing it is withdrawn in the body from all rural *environment*. It has not been so with Wordsworth, but it was so with Milton. The descriptive poetry in "Comus" is indeed rich as rich may be, but certainly not so great, perhaps not so beautiful, as that in "Paradise Lost."

It would seem to be so with all of us, small as well as great; and were *we*—Christopher North—to compose a poem on Loch Skene, two thousand feet or so above the level of the sea, and some miles from a house, we should desire to do so in a metropolitan cellar. Desire springs from separation. The spirit seeks to unite itself to the beauty it loves, the grandeur it admires, the sublimity it almost fears; and all these being o'er the hills and far away, or on the hills cloud-hidden, why it—the spirit—makes itself wings—or rather wings grow up of themselves in its passion, and naturewards it flies like a dove or an eagle. People looking at us believe us present, but they never were so far mistaken in their lives; for in the Seamew are we sailing with the tide through the moonshine on Loch Etive—or hanging o'er that gulf of peril on the bosom of Skyroura.

We are sitting now in a dusky den—with our eyes shut—but we see the whole Highlands. Our Highland Mountains are of the best possible magnitude—ranging between two and four thousand feet high—and then in what multitudes! The more familiar you become with them, the mightier they appear—and you feel that it is all sheer folly to seek to dwindle or dwarf them, by comparing them as they rise before your eyes with your imagination of Mont Blanc and those eternal glaciers. If you can bring them under your command, you are indeed a sovereign—and have a noble set of subjects. In some weather they are of any height you choose to put them—say thirty

thousand feet—in other states of the atmosphere you think you could walk over their summits and down into the region beyond in an hour. Try. We have seen Cruachan, during a whole black day, swollen into such enormous bulk, that Loch Awe looked like but a sullen river at his base, her woods bushes, and Kilchurn no bigger than a cottage. The whole visible scene was but he and his shadow. They seemed to make the day black, rather than the day to make them so—and at nightfall he took wider and loftier possession of the sky—the clouds congregated round without hiding his summit, on which seemed to twinkle, like earth-lighted fires, a few uncertain stars. Rain drives you into a shieling—and you sit there for an hour or two in eloquent confabulation with the herdsman, your English against his Gaelic. Out of the door you creep—and gaze in astonishment on a new world. The mist is slowly rolling up and away in long lines of clouds, preserving, perhaps, a beautiful regularity on their ascension and evanescence, and between them

> "Tier above tier, a wooded theatre
> Of stateliest view,"

or cliff galleries with strange stone-images sitting up aloft; and yet your eyes have not reached the summits, nor will they reach them, till all that vapoury ten-mile-long mass dissolve, or be scattered, and then you start to see them, as if therein had been but their bases, THE MOUNTAINS, with here and there a peak illumined, reposing in the blue serene that smiles as if all the while it had been above reach of the storm.

The power of Egoism accompanies us into solitude; nay, is even more life-pervading there than in the hum of men. There the stocks and stones are more impressible than those we sometimes stumble on in human society, and, moulded at our will, take what shape we choose to give them; the trees follow our footsteps, though our lips be mute, and we may have left at home our fiddle—more potent we in our actuality than the fabled Orpheus. Be hushed, ye streams, and listen unto Christopher! Be chained, ye clouds, and attentive unto North! And at our bidding silent the cataract on the cliff—the thunder on the sky. The sea beholds us on the shore—and his one huge frown transformed into a multitudinous smile, he turns flowing affections towards us along the golden

sands—and in a fluctuating hindrance of lovely foam-wreaths envelopes our feet!

To return to Thomson. Wordsworth labours to prove, in one of his "postliminious prefaces," that the true spirit of "The Seasons," till long after their publication, was neither felt nor understood. In the conduct of his argument he does not shine. That the poem was at once admired he is forced to admit; but then, according to him, the admiration was false and hollow—it was regarded but with that wonder which is the "natural product of ignorance." After having observed that, excepting the "Nocturnal Reverie" of Lady Winchilsea, and a passage or two in the "Windsor Forest" of Pope, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the "Paradise Lost" and "The Seasons" does not contain a single new image of external nature, he proceeds to call the once well-known verses of Dryden in the "Indian Emperor," descriptive of the hush of night, "vague, bombastic, and senseless," and Pope's celebrated translation of the moonlight scene in the "Iliad," altogether "absurd,"—and then, without ever once dreaming of any necessity of showing them to be so, or even, if he had succeeded in doing so, of the utter illogicality of any argument drawn from their failure to establish the point he is hammering at, he all at once says, with the most astounding assumption, "*having shown* that much of what his [Thomson's] biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?" "*Having shown*"!!! Why, he has shown nothing but his own arrogance in supposing that his mere *ipse dixit* will be taken by the whole world as proof that Dryden and Pope had not the use of their eyes. "Strange to think of an enthusiast," he says (alluding to the passage in Pope's translation of the "Iliad"), "as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their *absurdity!*" We are no enthusiasts—we are far too old for that folly; but we have eyes in our head, though sometimes rather dim and motey, and as good eyes, too, as Mr Wordsworth, and we often have recited —and hope often will recite them again—Pope's exquisite lines, not only without any "suspicion of their absurdity," but with the conviction of a most devout belief that, with some

little vagueness perhaps, and repetition, and a word here and there that might be altered for the better, the description is most beautiful. But grant it miserable—grant all Mr Wordsworth has so dictatorially uttered—and what then? Though descriptive poetry did not flourish during the period between "Paradise Lost" and "The Seasons," nevertheless, did not mankind enjoy the use of their seven senses? Could they not see and hear without the aid of those oculists and aurists, the poets? Were all the shepherds and agriculturists of England and Scotland blind and deaf to all the sights and sounds of nature, and all the gentlemen and ladies too, from the king and queen upon the throne, to the lowest of their subjects? Very like a whale! Causes there were why poetry flowed during that era in another channel than that of the description of natural scenery; and if it flowed too little in that channel then—which is true—equally is it true that it flows now in it too much—especially among the poets of the Lake School, to the neglect, not of sentiments and affections—for there they excel—but of strong direct human passion applied to the stir and tumult—of which the interest is profound and eternal—of all the great affairs of human life. But though the descriptive poets during the period between Milton and Thomson were few and indifferent, no reason is there in this world for imagining, with Mr Wordsworth, that men had forgotten both the heavens and the earth. They had not—nor was the wonder with which they must have regarded the great shows of nature, the "natural product of ignorance," then, any more than it is now, or ever was during a civilised age. If we be right in saying so—then neither could the admiration which "The Seasons," on the first appearance of that glorious poem, excited, be said, with any truth, to have been but a "wonder, the natural product of ignorance."

Mr Wordsworth having thus signally failed in his attempt to show that "much of what Thomson's biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment," let us accompany him in his equally futile efforts to show "how the rest is to be accounted for." He attempts to do so after this fashion: "Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one; in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most

likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of 'The Seasons,' the book generally opens of itself with the Rhapsody on Love, or with one of the stories, perhaps of Damon and Musidora. These also are prominent in our Collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice."

Thomson, in one sense, *was fortunate* in the *title* of his poem. But a great poet like Wordsworth might—nay, ought to have chosen another word—or have given of that word a loftier explanation, when applied to Thomson's *choice* of the Seasons for the subject of his immortal poem. Genius made that choice—not fortune. The "Seasons" are not merely the "*title*" of his poem—they are his poem, and his poem is the Seasons. But how, pray, can Thomson be said to have been *fortunate* in the *title* or the subject either of his poem, in the sense that Mr Wordsworth means? Why, according to him, people knew little, and cared less, about the Seasons. "The art of seeing had in some measure been learned!" That he allows—but that was all—and that all is but little—and surely far from being enough to have disposed people in general to listen to the strains of a poet who painted nature in all her moods, and under all her aspects. Thomson, then, we say, was either most *unfortunate* in the title of his poem, or there was not with the many that indifference to, and ignorance of natural scenery, on which Mr Wordsworth so strenuously insists as part, or rather whole, of his preceding argument.

The title, Mr Wordsworth says, seemed "to bring the poem home to the *prepared sympathies* of every one!" What! to the prepared sympathies of those who had merely, in some measure, learned the "art of seeing," and who had "paid," as he says in another sentence, "little accurate attention to the appearances of nature!" Never did the weakest mind ever fall into grosser contradictions than does here one of the strongest, in vainly labouring to bolster up a silly assertion, which he has desperately ventured on from a most mistaken conceit that it was necessary to account for the kind of reception which his own poetry had met with from the present age. The truth is, that had Mr Wordsworth known, when he indited

these luckless and helpless sentences, that his own poetry was, in the best sense of the word, a thousand times more popular than he supposed it to be—and Heaven be praised, for the honour of the age, it was and is so!—never had they been written, nor had he here and elsewhere laboured to prove that in proportion as poetry is bad, or rather as it is no poetry at all, is it, has been, and always will be, more and more popular in the age contemporary with the writer. That Thomson, in "The Seasons," *sometimes* writes a *vicious style*, may be true; but it is not true that he *often* does so. His style has its faults, no doubt, and some of them inextricably interwoven with the web of his composition. It is a dangerous style to imitate—especially to dunces. But its *virtue is divine;* and that *divine virtue*, even in this low world of ours, wins admiration more surely and widely than *earthly vice*—be it in words, thoughts, feelings, or actions—is a creed that we will not relinquish at the beck or bidding even of the great author of "The Excursion."

That many did—do—and will admire the bad or indifferent passages in "The Seasons"—won by their false glitter or commonplace sentimentalism, is no doubt true: but the delight, though as intense as perhaps it may be foolish, with which boys and virgins, woman-mantuamakers and man-milliners, and "the rest," peruse the Rhapsody on Love—one passage of which we ventured to be facetious on in our Soliloquy on the Seasons—and hang over the picture of Musidora undressing, while Damon watches the process of disrobement, panting behind a tree, will never account for the admiration with which the whole world hailed the "Winter," the first published of "The Seasons;" during which, Thomson had not the barbarity to plunge any young lady naked into the cold bath, nor the ignorance to represent, during such cold weather, any young lady turning her lover sick by the ardour of her looks, and the vehemence of her whole enamoured deportment. The time never was—nor could have been—when such passages were generally esteemed the glory of the poem. Indeed, independently of its own gross absurdity, the assertion is at total variance with that other assertion, equally absurd, that people admired most in the poem what they least understood; for the Rhapsody on Love is certainly very intelligible, nor does there seem much mystery in Muisdora going into the water to wash and cool herself on a hot day. Is it not

melancholy, then, to hear such a man as Mr Wordsworth, earnestly, and even somewhat angrily, trying to prove that "these are the parts of the work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice?"

With respect to the "sentimental commonplaces with which Thomson abounds," no doubt they were and are popular; and many of them deserve to be so, for they are on a level with the usual current of human feeling, and many of them are eminently beautiful. Thomson had not the philosophical genius of Wordsworth, but he had a warm human heart, and its generous feelings overflow all his poem. These are not the most poetical parts of "The Seasons," certainly, where such effusions prevail; but still, so far from being either *vicious* or *worthless*, they have often a virtue and a worth that must be felt by all the children of men. There is something not very credible in the situation of the parties in the story of the "lovely young Lavinia," for example, and much of the sentiment is commonplace enough; but will Mr Wordsworth say—in support of his theory, that the worst poetry is always at first (and at last too, it would seem, from the pleasure with which that tale is still read by all simple minds) the most popular—that that story is a bad one? It is a very beautiful one.

Mr Wordsworth, in all his argumentation, is so blinded by his determination to see everything in but one light, and that a most mistaken one, that he is insensible to the conclusion to which it all leads, or rather, which is involved in it. Why, according to him, *even now*, when people have not only learned the "art of seeing"—a blessing for which they can never be too thankful—but when descriptive poetry has long flourished far beyond its palmiest state in any other era of our literature, still are we poor common mortals who admire "The Seasons," just as deaf and blind now, or nearly so, to their real merits—allowed to be transcendent—as our unhappy forefathers were when that poem first appeared, "a glorious apparition." The Rhapsody on Love, and Damon and Musidora, are still, according to him, its chief attraction—its false ornaments—and its sentimental commonplaces—such as those, we presume, on the benefits of early rising, and,

"Oh! little think the gay licentious proud!"

What a nest of ninnies must people in general be in Mr Wordsworth's eyes! And is "The Excursion" not to be placed by the side of "Paradise Lost," till the Millennium?

Such is the *reasoning* (!) of one of the first of our English poets, against not only the people of Britain, but mankind. One other sentence there is which we had forgotten—but now remember—which is to help us to distinguish, in the case of the reception "The Seasons" met with, between "wonder and legitimate admiration!" "The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year; *and, undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a poet!*" How original and profound! Thomson redeemed his pledge; and that great pawnbroker, the public, returned to him his poem at the end of a year and a day. Now, what is the "mighty stream of tendency" of that remark? Were the public, or the people, or the world, gulled by this unheard-of pledge of Thomson, to regard his work with that "wonder which is the natural product of ignorance!" If they were so in his case, why not in every other? All poets pledge themselves to be poetical, but too many of them are wretchedly prosaic—die and are buried, or what is worse, protract a miserable existence, in spite of their sentimental commonplaces, false ornaments, and a vicious style. But Thomson, in spite of all these, leapt at once into a glorious life, and a still more glorious immortality.

There is no mystery in the matter. Thomson—a great poet—poured his genius over a subject of universal interest; and "The Seasons" from that hour to this—then, now, and for ever—have been, are, and will be loved, and admired by all the world. All over Scotland "The Seasons" is a household book. Let the taste and feeling shown by the Collectors of Elegant Extracts be poor as possible; yet Thomson's countrymen, high and low, rich and poor, have all along not only gloried in his illustrious fame, but have made a very manual of his great work. It lies in many thousand cottages. We have ourselves seen it in the shepherd's shieling, and in the woodsman's bower—small, yellow-leaved, tatter'd, mean, miserable, calf-skin-bound, smoked, *stinking* copies—let us not fear to utter the word, ugly but true—yet perused, pored, and pondered over by those humble dwellers, by the winter

ingle or on the summer brae, perhaps with as enlightened—certainly with as imagination-overmastering a delight as ever enchained the spirits of the high-born and highly-taught to their splendid copies lying on richly-carved tables, and bound in crimson silk or velvet, in which the genius of painting strives to embody that of poetry, and the printer's art to lend its beauty to the very shape of the words in which the bard's immortal spirit is enshrined. "The art of seeing" has flourished for many centuries in Scotland. Men, women, and children, all look up to her loveful blue or wrathful black skies, with a weather-wisdom that keeps growing from the cradle to the grave. Say not that 'tis alone

> "The poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
> Sees God in clouds, and hears Him in the wind!"

In Scriptural language, loftier even than that, the same imagery is applied to the sights seen by the true believer. Who is it "that maketh the clouds His chariot?" The Scottish peasantry—Highland and Lowland—look much and often on nature thus; and they live in the heart of the knowledge and of the religion of nature. Therefore do they love Thomson as an inspired bard—only a little lower than the Prophets. In like manner have the people of Scotland—from time immemorial—enjoyed the use of their ears. Even persons somewhat hard of hearing, are not deaf to her waterfalls. In the sublime invocation to Winter, which we have quoted—we hear Thomson recording his own worship of nature in his boyish days, when he roamed among the hills of his father's parish, far away from the manse. In those strange and stormy delights did not thousands of thousands of the Scottish boyhood familiarly live among the mists and snows? Of all that number he alone had the genius to "here eternise on earth" his joy—but many millions have had souls to join religiously in the hymns he chanted. Yea, his native land, with one mighty voice, has for upwards of a century responded,

> "These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God!"

THE SNOWBALL BICKER OF PEDMOUNT.

Beautiful as Snow yet is to our eyes, even through our spectacles, how grey it looks beside that which used to come with the long winters that glorified the earth in our youth, till the white lustre was more delightful even than the green—and we prayed that the fine fleecy flakes might never cease falling waveringly from the veil of the sky! No sooner comes the winter now, than it is away again to one of the Poles. Then, it was a year in itself—a whole life. We remember slides a quarter of a mile long, on level meadows; and some not less steep, down the sides of hills that to us were mountains. No boy can slide on one leg now—not a single shoe seems to have sparables. The florid style of skating shows that that fine art is degenerating; and we look in vain for the grand simplicity of the masters that spread-eagled in the age of its perfection. A change has come over the spirit of the curler's dream. They seem to our ears indeed to have "quat their roaring play." The cry of "swoop-swoop" is heard still—but a faint, feeble, and unimpassioned cry, compared with that which used, on the Mearns Brother-Loch, to make the welkin ring, and for a moment to startle the moon and stars—those in the sky, as well as those below the ice—till again the tumult subsided—and all the host of heaven above and beneath became serene as a world of dreams. Is it not even so, Shepherd? What is a rink now on a pond in Duddingston policy, to the rinks that rang and roared of old on the Loch o' the Lowes, when every stone circled in a halo of spray, seemed instinct with spirit to obey, along all its flight, the voice of him that launched it on its unerring aim, and sometimes, in spite of his awkward skillessness, when the fate of the game hung on his own single crank, went cannonading through all obstacles, till

it fell asleep, like a beauty as it was, just as it kissed the Tee!

Again we see—again we sit in the Snow-house, built by us boys out of a drift in the minister's glebe, a drift—judging by the steeple, which was sixty—about twenty feet high—and purer than any marble. The roof was all strewed with diamonds, which frost saved from the sun. The porch of the palace was pillared—and the character of the building outside was, without any servile imitation—for we worked in the glow of original genius, and none of us had then ever seen itself or its picture—wonderfully like the Parthenon. Entering, you found yourself in a superb hall, lighted up—not with gas, for up to that era gas had not been used except in Pandemonium—but with a vast multitude of farthing candles, each in a turnip stuck into the wall—while a chandelier of frozen snow-branches pendent from the roof set that presence-chamber in a blaze. On a throne at the upper end sat young Christopher North—then the king of boys, as now of men—and proud were his subjects to do him homage. In niches all around the side-walls were couches covered with hare, rabbit, foumart, and fox's skins—furnished by these animals slain by us in the woods and among the rocks of that sylvan and moorland parish—the regal Torus alone being spread with the dun-deer's hide from Lochiel Forest in Lochaber. Then old airs were sung—in sweet single voice—or in full chorus that startled the wandering night traveller on his way to the lone Kingswell; and then in the intermediate hush, old tales were told "of goblin, ghost, or fairy," or of Wallace Wight at the Barns of Ayr or the Brig o' Stirling—or, a glorious outlaw, harbouring in caves among the Cartlane Craigs—or of Robert Bruce the Deliverer, on his shelty cleaving in twain the skull of Bohun the English knight, on his thundering war-steed, armed cap-à-pie, while the King of Scotland had nothing on his unconquered head but his plain golden crown. Tales of the Snow-house! Had we but the genius to recall you to life in undying song!

Nor was our frozen hall at times uncheered by the smiles of beauty. With those smiles was heard the harmless love-whisper, and the harmless kiss of love; for the cottages poured forth their little lasses in flower-like bands, nor did their parents fear to trust them in the fairy frozen palace, where

Christopher was king. Sometimes the old people themselves came to see the wonders of the lamp, and on a snow-table stood a huge bowl—not of snow—steaming with nectar that made Hyems smile as he hung his beard over the fragrant vapour. Nay, the minister himself—with his mother and sister—was with us in our fantastic festivities, and gave to the architecture of our palace his wondering praise. Then Andrew Lyndsey, the blind Paisley musician, a Latin scholar, who knew where Cremona stood, struck up on his famous fiddle jig or strathspey—and the swept floor, in a moment, was alive with a confused flight of foursome reels, each begun and ended with kisses, and maddened by many a whoop and yell—so like savages were we in our glee, dancing at the marriage of some island king!

Countless years have fled since that Snow-palace melted away—and of all who danced there, how many are now alive! Pshaw! as many probably as then danced anywhere else. It would never do to live for ever—let us then live well and wisely; and when death comes—from that sleep how blessed to awake! in a region where is no frost—no snow—but the sun of eternal life.

Mercy on us! what a hubbub!—Can the harriers be hunting in such a snowfall as this, and is poor pussy in view before the whole murderous pack, opening in full cry on her haunches? Why—Imagination, thou art an ass, and thy long ears at all times greedy of deception! 'Tis but a country Schoolhouse pouring forth its long-imprisoned stream of life as in a sudden sunny thaw, the Mad Master flying in the van of his helter-skelter scholars, and the whole yelling mass precipitated, many of them headlong, among the snow. Well do we know the fire-eyed Poet pedagogue, who, more outrageous than Apollo, has "ravished all the Nine." Ode, elegy, epic, tragedy, or farce—all come alike to him; and of all the bards we have ever known—and the sum total cannot be under a thousand—he alone, judging from the cock and the squint of his eye, labours under the blessing or the curse—we wot not whilk it be—of perpetual inspiration. A rare eye, too, is his at the setting of a springe for woodcocks, or tracking a maukin on the snow. Not a daredevil in the school that durst follow the indentations of his toes and fingers up the wall of the old castle, to the holes just below the battlements, to thrust his arm up to

the elbows harrying the starlings' nests. The corbies ken the shape of his shoulders, as craftily he threads the wood; and let them build their domicile as high as the swinging twigs will bear its weight, agile as squirrel, and as foumart ferocious, up speels, by the height undizzied, the dreadless Dominie; and should there be fledged or puddock-haired young ones among the wool, whirling with guttural cawings down a hundred feet descent, on the hard rooty ground floor from which springs pine, oak, or ash, driven out is the life, with a squelsh and a squash, from the worthless carrion. At swimming we should not boggle to back him for the trifle of a cool hundred against the best survivor among those water-serpents, Mr Turner, Dr Bedale, Lieutenant Ekenhead, Lord Byron, Leander, and Ourselves—while, with the steel shiners on his soles, into what a set of ninnies in their ring would he not reduce the Edinburgh Skating Club?

Saw ye ever a Snowball Bicker? Never! Then look there with all the eyes in your head—only beware of a bash on the bridge of your nose, a bash that shall dye the snow with your virgin blood. The Poet-pedagogue, *alias* the Mad Dominie, with Bob Howie as his Second in Command, has chosen the Six stoutest striplings for his troop, and, at the head of that Sacred Band, offers battle to Us at the head of the whole School. Nor does that formidable force decline the combat. War levels all foolish distinctions of scholarship. Booby is Dux now, and Dux Booby—and the obscure dunce is changed into an illustrious hero.

> "The combat deepens—on, ye brave,
> Who rush to glory or the grave!
> Wave, Nitton, all thy banners wave,
> And charge with all thy schoolery!"

Down from the mount on which it had been drawn up in battle array, in solid square comes the School army, with shouts that might waken the dead, and inspire with the breath of life the nostrils of the great Snow-giant built up at the end of yonder avenue, and indurated by last night's frost. But there lies a fresh fall—and a better day for a bicker never rose flakily from the yellow East. Far out of distance, and prodigal of powder lying three feet deep on the flats, and heaped up in drifts to tree and chimney-top, the tirailleurs,

flung out in front, commence the conflict by a shower of balls that, from the bosom of the yet untrodden snow between the two battles, makes spin like spray the shining surface. Then falling back on the main body, they find their places in the front rank, and the whole mottled mass, grey, blue, and scarlet, moves onwards o'er the whiteness, a moment ere they close,

"Calm as the breeze, but dreadful as the storm!"

"Let fly," cries a clear voice—and the snowball storm hurtles through the sky. Just then the valley-mouth blew sleety in the faces of the foe—their eyes, as if darkened with snuff or salt, blinked bat-like—and with erring aim flew their feckless return to that shower of frosty fire. Incessant is the silent cannonade of the resistless School—silent but when shouts proclaim the fall or flight of some doughty champion in the adverse legion.

See—see—the Sacred Band are broken! The cravens take ignominiously to flight—and the Mad Dominie and Bob Howie alone are left to bear the brunt of battle. A dreadful brotherhood! But the bashing balls are showered upon them right and left from scores of catapultic arms—and the day is going sore against them, though they fight less like men than devils. Hurra! the Dominie's down, and Bob staggers. "Guards, up and at them!" "A simultaneous charge of cocks, hens, and earocks!" No sooner said than done. Bob Howie is buried—and the whole School is trampling on its Master!

"Oh, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!"

The smothered ban of Bob, and the stifled denunciations of the Dominie, have echoed o'er the hill, and,

"Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,"

the runaways, shaking the snows of panic from their pows,

"Like dewdrops from the lion's mane,"

come rushing to the rescue. Two of the Six tremble and turn. The high heroic scorn of their former selves urges four to renew the charge, and the sound of their feet on the snow is like that of an earthquake. What bashes on bloody noses! What bungings-up of eyes! Of lips what slittings! Red is many a spittle! And as the coughing urchin groans, and claps his hand to his mouth, distained is the snowball that drops unlaunched at his feet. The School are broken—their hearts die within them—and—can we trust our blasted eyes?—the white livers show the white feather, and fly! O shame! O sorrow! O sin! they turn their backs and fly! Disgraced are the mothers that bore them—and "happy in my mind," wives and widows, "were ye that died," undoomed to hear the tidings of this wretched overthrow! Heavens and earth! sixty are flying before Six!—and half of sixty—oh! that we should record it!—*are pretending to be dead!!* Would indeed that the snow were their winding-sheet, so that it might but hide our dishonour!

Look, we beseech you, at the Mad Dominie! like Hector issuing from the gates of Troy, and driving back the Greeks to their ships; or rather—hear, spirit of Homer!—like some great, shaggy, outlandish wolf-dog, that hath swum ashore from some strange wreck, and, after a fortnight's famine on the bare sea-cliffs, been driven by the hunger that gnaws his stomach like a cancer, and the thirst-fever that can only be slaked in blood, to venture prowling for prey up the vale, till, snuffing the scent of a flock of sheep, after some grim tiger-like creeping on his belly, he springs at last, with huge long spangs, on the woolly people, with bull-like growlings quailing their poor harmless hearts, and then fast throttling them, one after another—till, as it might seem rather in wantonness of rage than in empty pangs, he lies down at last in the midst of all the murdered carcasses, licking the blood off his flews and paws—and then, looking and listening round with his red turbid eyes, and sharp-pointed ears savagely erect, conscious of crime and fearful of punishment, soon as he sees and hears that all the coast is clear and still, again gloatingly fastens his tusks behind the ears, and then eats into the kidneys of the fattest of the flock, till, sated with gore and tallow, he sneaks stealthily into the wood, and coiling himself up all his wiry length—now no longer lank, but swollen and knotted

like that of a deer-devouring snake—he falls suddenly asleep, and re-banquets in a dream of murder.

That simile was conceived in the spirit of Dan Homer, but delivered in that of Kit North. No matter. Like two such wolf-dogs are now Bob Howie and the Mad Dominie—and the School like such silly sheep. Those other hell-dogs are leaping in the rear—and to the eyes of fear and flight each one of the Six seems more many-headed than Cerberus, while their mouths kindle the frosty air into fire, and thunderbolts pursue the pell-mell of the panic.

Such and so imaginative is not only mental but corporeal fear. What though it be but a Snowball bicker! The air is darkened—no, brightened by the balls, as in many a curve they describe their airy flight—some hard as stones—some soft as slush—some blae and drippy in the cold-hot hand that launches them on the flying foe, and these are the teazers—some almost transparent in the cerulean sky, and broken ere they reach their aim, abortive "armamentaria cœli"—and some useless from the first, and felt, as they leave the palm, to be fozier than the foziest turnip, and unfit to bash a fly.

Far and wide, over hill, bank, and brae, are spread the flying School! Squads of us, at sore sixes and sevens, are making for the frozen woods. Alas! poor covert now in their naked leaflessness for the stricken deer! Twos and threes in miserable plight floundering in drift-wreaths! And here and there—woefullest sight of all—single boys distractedly ettling at the sanctuaries of distant houses—with their heads all the while insanely twisted back over their shoulders, and the glare of their eyes fixed frightfully on the swift-footed Mad Dominie, till souse over neck and ears, bubble and squeak, precipitated into traitorous pitfall, and in a moment evanished from this upper world!

Disturbed crows fly away a short distance and alight silent,—the magpies chatter pert even in alarm,—the lean kine, collected on the lown sides of braes, wonder at the rippet—their horns moving, but not their tails,—while the tempest-tamed bull—almost dull now as an ox—gives a short sullen growl as he feebly paws the snow.

But who is he—the tall slender boy—slender, but sinewy—a wiry chap—five feet eight on his stocking-soles—and on his stocking-soles he stands—for the snow has sucked his

shoes from his feet—that plants himself like an oak sapling, rooted ankle-deep on a knoll, and there, a juvenile Jupiter Stator, with voice and arm arrests the Flight, and fiercely gesticulating vengeance on the insolent foe, recalls and rallies the shattered School, that he may re-lead them to victory? The phantom of a visionary dream! KIT NORTH HIMSELF—

"In life's morning march when his spirit was young."

And once on a day was that figure—ours! Then like a chamois-hunter of the Alps! Now, alas! like—

"But be hush'd, my dark spirit—for wisdom condemns,
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as a rock of the ocean that stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore.
Through the perils of chance and the scowl of disdain,
Let thy front be unalter'd, thy courage elate;
Yea! even the name we have worshipp'd in vain
Shall awake not a pang of remembrance again;
To bear, is to conquer our fate!"

Half a century is annihilated as if it had never been: it is as if young Kit had become not old Kit—but were standing now as then front to front, with but a rood of trampled snow between them, before the Mad Dominie and Bob Howie—both the bravest of the brave in Snowball or Stone bicker—in street, lane, or muir fight—hand to hand, single-pitched with Black King Carey of the Gypsies—or in irregular high-road row—two to twelve—with a gang of Irish horse-coupers from the fair of Glasgow returning by Portpatrick to Donaghadee. 'Tis a strange thing so distinctly to see One's Self as he looked of yore—to lose one's present frail personal identity in that of the powerful past. Or rather to admire One's Self as he *was*, without consciousness of the mean vice of egotism, because of the pity almost bordering on contempt with which One regards One's Self as he *is*, shrivelled up into a sort of shrimp of a man—or blown out into a flounder.

The Snowball bicker owns an armistice—and Kit North—that is, we of the olden and the golden time—advance into the debatable ground between the two armies, with a frozen branch in our hand as a flag of truce. The Mad Dominie loved us, because then-a-days—bating and barring the cock

and the squint of his eye—we were like himself a poet, and while a goose might continue standing on one leg, could have composed one jolly act of a tragedy, or book of an epic, while Bob—God bless him!—to guard us from scathe would have risked his life against a whole craal of tinkers. With open arms they come forward to receive us; but our blood is up—and we are jealous of the honour of the School, which has received a stain which must be wiped out in blood. From what mixed motives act boys and men in the deeds deemed most heroic, and worthy of the meed of everlasting fame! Even so is it now with us—when sternly eyeing the other Six, and then respectfully the Mad Dominie, we challenge—not at long bowls—but toe to toe, at the scratch on the snow, with the naked mawlies, the brawny boy with the red shock-head, the villain with the carrots, who, by moonlight nights,

"Round the stacks with the lasses at bogles to play,"

had dared to stand between us and the ladye of our love. Off fly our jackets and stocks—it is not a day for buff—and at it like bull-dogs. Twice before had we fought him—at our own option—over the bonnet; for 'twas a sturdy villain, and famous for the cross-buttock. But now, after the first close, in which we lose the fall—with straight right-handers we keep him at off-fighting—and that was a gush of blood from his smeller. "How do you like that, Ben?" Giving his head, with a mad rush, he makes a plunge with his heavy left—for he was ker-handed—at our stomach. But a dip of our right elbow caught the blow, to the loud admiration of Bob Howie—and even the Mad Dominie, the umpire, could not choose but smile. Like lightning, our left returns between the ogles—and Ben bites the snow. Three cheers from the School—and, lifted on the knee of his second, James Maxwell Wallace, since signalised at Waterloo, and now a knighted colonel of horse, "he grins horribly a ghastly smile," and is brought up staggering to the scratch. We know that we have him—and ask considerately, "what he means by winking?" And now we play around him,

"Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild-goose at play."

He is brought down now to our own weight—then nine stone

jimp—his eyes are getting momently more and more pig-like—water-logged, like those of Queen Bleary, whose stone image lies in the echoing aisle of the old Abbey Church of Paisley—and bat-blind, he hits past our head and body, like an awkward hand at the flail, when drunk, thrashing corn. Another hit on the smeller, and a stinger on the throat-apple—and down he sinks like a poppy—deaf to the call of "time"—and victory smiles upon us from the bright blue skies. "Hurra—hurra—hurra! Christopher for ever!" and perched aloft, astride on the shoulders of Bob Howie—he, the Invincible, gallops with us all over the field, followed by the shouting School, exulting that Ben the Bully has at last met with an overthrow. We exact an oath that he will never again meddle with Meg Whitelaw—shake hands cordially, and

"Off to some other game we all together flew."

And so ended the famous Snowball Bicker of Pedmount, now immortalised in our Prose-Poem.

Some men, it is sarcastically said, are boys all life-long, and carry with them their puerility to the grave. 'Twould be well for the world were there in it more such men. By way of proving their manhood, we have heard grown-up people abuse their own boyhood—forgetting what our great Philosophical Poet—after Milton and Dryden—has told them, that

"The boy is father of the man,"

and thus libelling the author of their existence. A poor boy indeed must he have been, who submitted to misery when the sun was new in heaven. Did he hate or despise the flowers around his feet, congratulating him on being young like themselves? the stars, young always, though Heaven only knows how many million years old, every night sparkling in happiness which they manifestly wished him to share? Did he indeed in his heart believe that the moon, in spite of her shining midnight face, was made of green cheese? Not only are the foundations dug and laid in boyhood, of all the knowledge and the feelings of our prime, but the ground-flat too built, and often the second story of the entire superstructure, from the windows of which, the soul looking out, beholds nature in her state, and leaps down, unafraid of a fall on the green or white bosom of earth, to join with hymns the front of the pro-

cession. The soul afterwards perfects her palace—building up tier after tier of all imaginable orders of architecture—till the shadowy roof, gleaming with golden cupolas, like the cloud-region of the setting sun, set the heavens ablaze.

Gaze up on the highest idea—gaze down on the profoundest emotion—and you will know and feel in a moment that it is not a new birth. You become a devout believer in the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine of metempsychosis and reminiscence, and are awed by the mysterious consciousness of the thought "BEFORE!" Try then to fix its date, and back travels your soul, now groping its way in utter darkness, and now in darkness visible—now launching along lines of steady lustre, such as the moon throws on the broad bosoms of starry lakes—now dazzled by sudden contrast—

"Blind with excess of light!"

But back let it travel, as best or worst it may, through and amidst eras after eras of the wan or radiant past; yet never, except for some sweet instant of delusion, breaking dewdrop-like at a touch or a breath, during all that perilous pilgrimage—and perilous must it be, haunted by so many ghosts—never may it reach the shrine it seeks—the fountain from which first flowed that feeling whose origin seems to have been out of the world of time—dare we say—in eternity!

CHRISTMAS DREAMS.

How graciously provided are all the subdivisions of Time, diversifying the dream of human life! And why should moralists mourn over the mutability that gives the chief charm to all that passes so transitorily before our eyes!—leaving image upon image in the waters of memory, that can bear being stirred without being disturbed, and contain steadier and steadier reflections as they seem to repose on an unfathomable depth!—the years, the months, the weeks, the days, the nights, the hours, the minutes, the moments, each in itself a different living, and peopled, and haunted world. One life is a thousand lives, and each individual, as he fully renews the past, reappears in a thousand characters; yet all of them bearing a mysterious identity not to be misunderstood, and all of them, while every passion has been shifting and ceasing, and reascending into power, still under the dominion of the same Conscience, that feels and knows it is from God.

Who will complain of the shortness of human life, that can re-travel all the windings, and wanderings, and mazes that his feet have trodden since the farthest back hour at which memory pauses, baffled and blindfolded, as she vainly tries to penetrate and illumine the palpable, the impervious darkness that shrouds the few first years of our inscrutable being? Long, long, long ago seems it to be indeed, when we now remember it, the Time we first pulled the primroses on the sunny braes, wondering in our first blissful emotions of beauty at the leaves with a softness all their own—a yellowness nowhere else so vivid—"the bright consummate flower" so starlike to our awakened imagination among the lowly grass—lovely indeed to our admiring eyes as any one of all the stars that, in their turn, did seem themselves like flowers in the blue fields of heaven!

Long, long, long ago, the time when we danced hand in hand with our golden-haired sister! Long, long, long ago, the day on which she died—the hour, so far more dismal than any hour that can now darken us on this earth, when her coffin descended slowly, slowly into the horrid clay, and we were borne death-like, and wishing to die, out of the churchyard, that, from that moment, we thought we could enter never more! What a multitudinous being must ours have been, when, before our boyhood was gone, we could have forgotten her buried face! or at the dream of it, dashed off a tear, and away, with a bounding heart, in the midst of a cloud of playmates, breaking into fragments on the hill-side, and hurrying round the shores of those wild moorland lochs, in vain hope to surprise the heron that slowly uplifted his blue bulk, and floated away, regardless of our shouts, to the old castle woods. It is all like a reminiscence of some other state of existence.

Then, after all the joys and sorrows of those few years, which we now call transitory, but which our Boyhood felt as if they would be endless—as if they would endure for ever—arose upon us the glorious dawning of another new life—Youth—with its insupportable sunshine, and its agitating storms. Transitory, too, we now know, and well deserving the same name of dream. But while it lasted, long, various, and agonising; as, unable to sustain the eyes that first revealed to us the light of love, we hurried away from the parting hour, and, looking up to moon and stars, invocated in sacred oaths, hugged the very heavens to our heart. Yet life had not then nearly reached its meridian, journeying up the sunbright firmament. How long hung it there exulting, when "it flamed on the forehead of the noontide sky!" Let not the Time be computed by the lights and shadows of the years, but by the innumerable array of visionary thoughts, that kept deploying as if from one eternity into another—now in dark sullen masses, now in long array, brightened as if with spear-points and standards, and moving along through chasm, abyss, and forest, and over the summits of the highest mountains, to the sound of ethereal music, now warlike and tempestuous—now, as "from flutes and soft recorders" accompanying not pæans of victory but hymns of peace. That Life, too, seems, now that it is gone, to have been of a thousand years. Is it gone? Its skirts are yet hovering on the horizon. And is

there yet another Life destined for us? That Life which men fear to face—Age, Old Age! Four dreams within a dream—and *where* to awake?

At dead of night—and it is now dead of night—how the heart quakes on a sudden at the silent resurrection of buried thoughts! Perhaps the sunshine of some one single Sabbath of more exceeding holiness comes first glimmering, and then brightening upon us, with the very same sanctity that filled all the air at the tolling of the kirk-bell, when all the parish was hushed, and the voice of streams heard more distinctly among the banks and braes. Then, all at once, a thunder-storm, that many years before, or many years after, drove us, when walking alone over the mountains, into a shieling, will seem to succeed; and we behold the same threatening aspect of the heavens that then quailed our beating hearts, and frowned down our eyelids before the lightning began to flash, and the black rain to deluge all the glens. No need now for any effort of thought. The images rise of themselves—independently of our volition—as if another being, studying the working of our minds, conjured up the phantasmagoria before us who are beholding it with love, wonder, and fear. Darkness and silence have a power of sorcery over the past; the soul has then, too, often restored to it feelings and thoughts that it had lost, and is made to know that nothing it once experiences ever perishes, but that all things spiritual possess a principle of immortal life.

Why linger on the shadowy wall some of those phantasmagoria—returning after they have disappeared—and reluctant to pass away into their former oblivion? Why shoot others athwart the gloom, quick as spectral figures seen hurrying among mountains during a great storm? Why do some glare and threaten—why others fade away with a melancholy smile? Why *that one*—a Figure all in white, and with white roses in her hair—come forward through the haze, beautifying into distincter form and face, till her pale beseeching hands almost touch our neck—and then, in a moment, it is as nothing?

But now the room is disenchanted—and feebly our lamp is glimmering, about to leave us to the light of the moon and stars. There it is trimmed again—and the sudden increase of lustre cheers the heart within us like a festal strain. And To-Morrow—To-Morrow is Merry Christmas; and when its

night descends there will be mirth and music, and the light sound of the merry-twinkling feet within these now so melancholy walls—and sleep, now reigning over all the house save this one room, will be banished far over the sea—and morning will be reluctant to allow her light to break up the innocent orgies.

Were every Christmas of which we have been present at the celebration, painted according to nature—what a Gallery of Pictures! True that a sameness would pervade them all—but only that kind of sameness that pervades the nocturnal heavens. One clear night always is, to common eyes, just like another; for what hath any night to show but one moon and some stars—a blue vault, with here a few braided, and there a few castellated, clouds? Yet no two nights ever bore more than a family resemblance to each other before the studious and instructed eye of him who has long communed with Nature, and is familiar with every smile and frown on her changeful, but not capricious, countenance. Even so with the Annual Festivals of the heart. Then our thoughts are the stars that illumine those skies—and on ourselves it depends whether they shall be black as Erebus, or brighter than Aurora.

"Thoughts! that like spirits trackless come and go"—

is a fine line of Charles Lloyd's. But no bird skims, no arrow pierces the air, without producing some change in the Universe, which will last to the day of doom. No coming and going is absolutely trackless; nor irrecoverable by Nature's law is any consciousness, however ghostlike; though many a one, even the most blissful, never does return, but seems to be buried among the dead. But they are not dead—but only sleep; though to us who recall them not, they are as they had never been, and we, wretched ingrates, let them lie for ever in oblivion! How passing sweet when of their own accord they arise to greet us in our solitude?—as a friend who, having sailed away to a foreign land in our youth, has been thought to have died many long years ago, may suddenly stand before us, with face still familiar and name reviving in a moment, and all that he once was to us brought from utter forgetfulness close upon our heart.

My Father's House! How it is ringing like a grove in

spring, with the din of creatures happier, a thousand times happier, than all the birds on earth. It is the Christmas Holidays—Christmas Day itself—Christmas Night—and Joy in every bosom intensifies Love. Never before were we brothers and sisters so dear to one another—never before had our hearts so yearned towards the authors of our being—our blissful being! There they sit—silent in all that outcry—composed in all that disarray—still in all that tumult; yet, as one or other flying imp sweeps round the chair, a father's hand will playfully strive to catch a prisoner—a mother's gentler touch on some sylph's disordered symar be felt almost as a reproof, and for a moment slacken the fairy-flight. One old game treads on the heels of another—twenty within the hour—and many a new game never heard of before nor since, struck out by the collision of kindred spirits in their glee, the transitory fancies of genius inventive through very delight. Then, all at once, there is a hush, profound as ever falls on some little plat within a forest when the moon drops behind the mountain, and the small green-robed People of Peace at once cease their pastime, and evanish. For She—the Silver-Tongued—is about to sing an old ballad, words and air alike hundreds of years old—and sing she doth, while tears begin to fall, with a voice too mournfully beautiful long to breathe below—and, ere another Christmas shall have come with the falling snows, doomed to be mute on earth—but to be hymning in Heaven.

Of that House—to our eyes the fairest of earthly dwellings—with its old ivied turrets, and orchard-garden bright alike with fruit and with flowers, not one stone remains. The very brook that washed its foundations has vanished along with them—and a crowd of other buildings, wholly without character, has long stood where here a single tree, and there a grove, did once render so lovely that small demesne; which, how could we, who thought it the very heart of Paradise, even for one moment have believed was one day to be blotted out of being, and we ourselves—then so linked in love that the band which bound us all together was, in its gentle pressure, felt not nor understood—to be scattered far and abroad, like so many leaves that after one wild parting rustle are separated by roaring wind-eddies, and brought together no more! The old Abbey—it still survives; and there, in that corner of the

burial-ground, below that part of the wall which was least in ruins, and which we often climbed to reach the flowers and nests—there, in hopes of a joyful resurrection, lie the Loved and Venerated—for whom, even now that so many grief-deadening years have fled, we feel, in this holy hour, as if it were impiety so utterly to have ceased to weep—so seldom to have remembered!—And then, with a powerlessness of sympathy to keep pace with youth's frantic grief, the floods we all wept together—at no long interval—on those pale and placid faces as they lay, most beautiful and most dreadful to behold, in their coffins.

We believe that there is genius in all childhood. But the creative joy that makes it great in its simplicity dies a natural death or is killed, and genius dies with it. In favoured spirits, neither few nor many, the joy and the might survive; for you must know that unless it be accompanied with imagination, memory is cold and lifeless. The forms it brings before us must be inspired with beauty—that is, with affection or passion. All minds, even the dullest, remember the days of their youth; but all cannot bring back the indescribable brightness of that blessed season. They who would know what they once were, must not merely recollect, but they must imagine, the hills and valleys—if any such there were—in which their childhood played, the torrents, the waterfalls, the lakes, the heather, the rocks, the heaven's imperial dome, the raven floating only a little lower than the eagle in the sky. To imagine what he then heard and saw, he must imagine his own nature. He must collect from many vanished hours the power of his untamed heart, and he must, perhaps, transfuse also something of his maturer mind into these dreams of his former being, thus linking the past with the present by a continuous chain, which, though often invisible, is never broken. So is it too with the calmer affections that have grown within the shelter of a roof. We do not merely remember, we imagine our father's house, the fireside, all his features then most living, now dead and buried; the very manner of his smile, every tone of his voice. We must combine with all the passionate and plastic power of imagination the spirit of a thousand happy hours into one moment; and we must invest with all that we ever felt to be venerable such an image as alone can satisfy our filial hearts. It is

thus that imagination, which first aided the growth of all our holiest and happiest affections, can preserve them to us unimpaired—

> "For she can give us back the dead,
> Even in the loveliest looks they wore."

Then came a New Series of Christmases, celebrated one year in this family, another year in that—none present but those whom Charles Lamb the Delightful calleth the "old familiar faces;" something in all features, and all tones of voice, and all manners, betokening origin from one root—relations all, happy, and with no reason either to be ashamed or proud of their neither high nor humble birth—their lot being cast within that pleasant realm, "the Golden Mean," where the dwellings are connecting-links between the hut and the hall—fair edifices resembling manse or mansion-house, according as the atmosphere expands or contracts their dimensions—in which Competence is next-door neighbour to Wealth, and both of them within the daily walk of Contentment.

Merry Christmases they were indeed—one Lady always presiding, with a figure that once had been the stateliest among the stately, but then somewhat bent, without being bowed down, beneath an easy weight of most venerable years. Sweet was her tremulous voice to all her grandchildren's ears. Nor did those solemn eyes, bedimmed into a pathetic beauty, in any degree restrain the glee that sparkled in orbs that had as yet shed not many tears, but tears of joy or pity. Dearly she loved all those mortal creatures whom she was soon about to leave; but she sat in sunshine even within the shadow of death; and the "voice that called her home" had so long been whispering in her ear, that its accents had become dear to her, and consolatory every word that was heard in the silence, as from another world.

Whether we were indeed all so witty as we thought ourselves—uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, cousins, and "the rest," it might be presumptuous in us, who were considered by ourselves and a few others not the least amusing of the whole set, at this distance of time to decide—especially in the affirmative; but how the roof did ring with sally, pun, retort, and repartee! Ay, with pun—a species of impertinence for which we have therefore a kindness even to this day. Had incomparable Thomas Hood had the good

fortune to have been born a cousin of ours, how with that fine fancy of his would he have shone at those Christmas festivals, eclipsing us all! Our family, through all its different branches, has ever been famous for bad voices, but good ears; and we think we hear ourselves—all those uncles and aunts, nephews and nieces, and cousins—singing now! Easy is it to "warble melody" as to breathe air. But we hope harmony is the most difficult of all things to people in general, for to us it was impossible; and what attempts ours used to be at Seconds! Yet the most woeful failures were rapturously encored; and ere the night was done we spoke with most extraordinary voices indeed, every one hoarser than another, till at last, walking home with a fair cousin, there was nothing left for it but a tender glance of the eye—a tender pressure of the hand—for cousins are not altogether sisters, and although partaking of that dearest character, possess, it may be, some peculiar and appropriate charms of their own; as didst thou, Emily the "Wild-cap!"—That *sobriquet* all forgotten now—for now thou art a matron, nay a Grandam, and troubled with an elf fair and frolicsome as thou thyself wert of yore, when the gravest and wisest withstood not the witchery of thy dancings, thy singings, and thy showering smiles.

On rolled Suns and Seasons—the old died—the elderly became old—and the young, one after another, were wafted joyously away on the wings of hope, like birds almost as soon as they can fly ungratefully forsaking their nests and the groves in whose safe shadow they first essayed their pinions; or like pinnaces that, after having for a few days trimmed their snow-white sails in the land-locked bay, close to whose shores of silvery sand had grown the trees that furnished timber both for hull and mast, slip their tiny cables on some summer-day, and gathering every breeze that blows, go dancing over the waves in sunshine, and melt far off into the main. Or, haply, some were like fair young trees, transplanted during no favourable season, and never to take root in another soil, but soon leaf and branch to wither beneath the tropic sun, and die almost unheeded by those who knew not how beautiful they had been beneath the dews and mists of their own native climate.

Vain images! and therefore chosen by fancy not too painfully to touch the heart. For some hearts grow cold and

forbidding with selfish cares—some, warm as ever in their own generous glow, were touched by the chill of Fortune's frowns, ever worst to bear when suddenly succeeding her smiles—some, to rid themselves of painful regrets, took refuge in forgetfulness, and closed their eyes to the past—duty banished some abroad, and duty imprisoned others at home—estrangements there were, at first unconscious and unintended, yet ere long, though causeless, complete—changes were wrought insensibly, invisibly, even in the innermost nature of those who being friends knew no guile, yet came thereby at last to be friends no more—unrequited love broke some bonds—requited love relaxed others—the death of one altered the conditions of many—and so—year after year—the Christmas Meeting was interrupted—deferred—till finally it ceased with one accord, unrenewed and unrenewable. For when Some Things cease for a time—that time turns out to be for ever.

Survivors of those happy circles! wherever ye be—should these imperfect remembrances of days of old chance, in some thoughtful pause of life's busy turmoil, for a moment to meet your eyes, let there be towards the inditer a few throbs of revived affection in your hearts—for his, though "absent long and distant far," has never been utterly forgetful of the loves and friendships that charmed his youth. To be parted in body is not to be estranged in spirit—and many a dream and many a vision, sacred to nature's best affections, may pass before the mind of one whose lips are silent. "Out of sight out of mind" is rather the expression of a doubt—of a fear—than of a belief or a conviction. The soul surely has eyes that can see the objects it loves, through all intervening darkness—and of those more especially dear it keeps within itself almost undimmed images, on which, when they know it not, think it not, believe it not, it often loves to gaze, as on relics imperishable as they are hallowed.

All hail! rising beautiful and magnificent through the mists of morning—ye Woods, Groves, Towers, and Temples, overshadowing that famous Stream beloved by all the Muses! Through this midnight hush—methinks we hear faint and far-off sacred music—

> "Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
> The pealing anthem swells the note of praise!"

How steeped now in the stillness of moonlight are all those pale, pillared Churches, Courts and Cloisters, Shrines and Altars, with here and there a Statue standing in the shade, or Monument sacred to the memory of the pious—the immortal dead. Some great clock is striking from one of many domes —from the majestic Tower of St Mary Magdalen—and in the deepened hush that follows the solemn sound, the mingling waters of the Cherwell and the Isis soften the severe silence of the holy night.

Remote from kindred, and from all the friendships that were the native growth of the fair fields where our boyhood and our youth had roamed and meditated and dreamed, those were indeed years of high and lofty mood which held us in converse with the shades of great Poets and Sages of old in Rhedicyna's hallowed groves, still, serene, and solemn, as that Attic Academe where divine Plato, with all Hybla on his lips, discoursed such excellent music that his life seemed to the imagination spiritualised—a dim reminiscence of some former state of being. How sank then the Christmas Service of that beautiful Liturgy into our hearts! Not faithless we to the simple worship that our forefathers had loved; but Conscience told us there was no apostasy in the feelings that rose within us when that deep organ began to blow, that choir of youthful voices so sweetly to join the diapason,—our eyes fixed all the while on that divine Picture over the Altar, of our Saviour

> "Bearing his cross up rueful Calvary."

The City of Palaces disappears—and in the setting sunlight we behold mountains of soft crimson snow! The sun hath set, and even more beautiful are the bright-starred nights of winter, than summer in all its glories beneath the broad moons of June. Through the woods of Windermere, from cottage to cottage, by coppice-pathways winding up to dwellings among the hill-rocks where the birch-trees cease to grow—

> "Nodding their heads, before us go,
> The merry minstrelsy."

They sing a salutation at every door, familiarly naming old and young by their Christian names; and the eyes that look upward from the vales to the hanging huts among the plats and cliffs, see the shadows of the dancers ever and anon cross-

ing the light of the star-like window, and the merry music is heard like an echo dwelling in the sky. Across those humble thresholds often did we on Christmas-week nights of yore—wandering through our solitary sylvan haunts, under the branches of trees within whose hollow trunk the squirrel slept—venture in, unasked perhaps, but not unwelcome, and, in the kindly spirit of the season, did our best to merrify the Festival by tale or song. And now that we behold them not, are all those woods, and cliffs, and rivers, and tarns, and lakes, as beautiful as when they softened and brightened beneath our living eyes, half-creating, as they gazed, the very world they worshipped? And are all those hearths as bright as of yore, without the shadow of our figure? And the roofs, do they ring as mirthfully, though our voice be forgotten? We hang over Westmoreland, an unobserved—but observant star. Mountains, hills, rocks, knolls, vales, woods, groves, single trees, dwellings—all asleep! O Lakes! but ye are, indeed, by far too beautiful! O fortunate Isles! too fair for human habitation, fit abode for the Blest! It will not hide itself—it will not sink into the earth—it will rise; and risen, it will stand steady with its shadow in the overpowering moonlight, that ONE TREE! that ONE HOUSE!—and well might the sight of ye two together—were it harder—break our heart. But hard at all it is not—therefore it is but crushed.

Can it be that there we are utterly forgotten! No star hanging higher than the Andes in heaven—but sole-sitting at midnight in a small chamber—a melancholy man are we—and there seems a smile of consolation, O Wordsworth! on thy sacred Bust.

Alas! how many heavenly days, "seeming immortal in their depth of rest," have died and been forgotten! Treacherous and ungrateful is our memory even of bliss that overflowed our being as light our habitation. Our spirit's deepest intercommunion with nature has no place in her records—blanks are there that ought to have been painted with imperishable imagery, and steeped in sentiment fresh as the morning on life's golden hills. Yet there is mercy in this dispensation—for who can bear to behold the light of bliss re-arising from the past on the ghastlier gloom of present misery? The phantoms that will not come when we call on them to comfort

us, are too often at our side when in our anguish we could almost pray that they might be reburied in oblivion. Such hauntings as these are not as if they were visionary—they come and go like forms and shapes still imbued with life. Shall we vainly stretch out our arms to embrace and hold them fast, or as vainly seek to intrench ourselves by thoughts of this world against their visitation? The soul in its sickness knows not whether it be the duty of love to resign itself to indifference or to despair. Shall it enjoy life, they being dead! Shall we the survivors, for yet a little while, walk in other companionship out into the day, and let the sunbeams settle on their heads as they used to do, or cover them with dust and ashes, and show to those in heaven that love for them is now best expressed by remorse and penitence!

Sometimes we have fears about our memory—that it is decaying; for, lately, many ordinary yet interesting occurrences and events, which we regarded at the time with pain or pleasure, have been slipping away almost into oblivion, and have often alarmed us of a sudden by their return, not to any act of recollection, but of themselves, sometimes wretchedly out of place and season, the mournful obtruding upon the merry, and worse, the merry upon the mournful—confusion, by no fault of ours, of piteous and of gladsome faces—tears where smiles were a duty as well as a delight, and smiles where nature demanded, and religion hallowed, a sacrifice of tears.

For a good many years we have been tied to town in winter by fetters as fine as frostwork filigree, which we could not break without destroying a whole world of endearment. That seems an obscure image; but it means what the Germans would call in English—our winter environment. We are imprisoned in a net of our own weaving—an invisible net; yet we can see it when we choose—just as a bird can see, when he chooses, the wires of his cage, that are invisible in his happiness, as he keeps hopping and fluttering about all day long, or haply dreaming on his perch with his poll under his plumes—as free in confinement as if let loose into the boundless sky. That seems an obscure image too; but we mean, in truth, the prison unto which we doom ourselves no prison is; and we have improved on that idea, for we have built our own—and are prisoner, turnkey, and jailer all in one, and 'tis

noiseless as the house of sleep. Or what if we declare that Christopher North is a king in his palace, with no subjects but his own thoughts—his rule peaceful over those lights and shadows—and undisputed to reign over them his right divine.

The opening year in a town, now, answers in all things to our heart's desire. How beautiful the smoky air! The clouds have a homely look as they hang over the happy families of houses, and seem as if they loved their birthplace; all unlike those heartless clouds that keep *stravaiging* over mountain-tops, and have no domicile in the sky! Poets speak of living rocks, but what is their life to that of houses? Who ever saw a rock with eyes—that is, with windows? Stone-blind all, and stone-deaf, and with hearts of stone; whereas who ever saw a house without eyes—that is, windows? Our own is an Argus; yet the good old Conservative grudges not the assessed taxes—his optics are as cheerful as the day that lends them light, and they love to salute the setting sun, as if a hundred beacons, level above level, were kindled along a mountain side. He might safely be pronounced a madman who preferred an avenue of trees to a street. Why, trees have no chimneys; and, were you to kindle a fire in the hollow of an oak, you would soon be as dead as a Druid. It won't do to talk to us of sap, and the circulation of sap. A grove in winter, bole and branch—leaves it has none—is as dry as a volume of sermons. But a street, or a square, is full of "vital sparks of heavenly flame" as a volume of poetry, and the heart's blood circulates through the system like rosy wine.

But a truce to comparisons; for we are beginning to feel contrition for our crime against the country, and, with humbled head and heart, we beseech you to pardon us—ye rocks of Pavey-Ark, the pillared palaces of the storms—ye clouds, now wreathing a diadem for the forehead of Helvellyn—ye trees, that hang the shadows of your undying beauty over the "one perfect chrysolite" of blessed Windermere!

Our meaning is transparent now as the hand of an apparition waving peace and goodwill to all dwellers in the land of dreams. In plainer but not simpler words (for words are like flowers, often rich in their simplicity—witness the Lily, and Solomon's Song)—Christian people all, we wish you a Merry

Christmas and Happy New-Year, in town or in country—or in ships at sea.

A Happy New-Year!—Ah! ere this Aria, sung *sotto voce*, reach your ears (eyes are ears, and ears eyes), the week of all weeks will be over and gone, and the New-Year will seem growing out of the old year's ashes!—for the year is your only Phœnix. But what with time to do has a wish—a hope—a prayer! Their power is in the Spirit that gives them birth. And what is Spirit but the well-head of thoughts and feelings flowing and overflowing all life, yet leaving the well-head full of water as ever—so lucid, that on your gazing intently into its depths, it seems to become a large soft spiritual eye, reflecting the heavens and the earth; and no one knows what the heavens and the earth are, till he has seen them there—for that God made the heavens and the earth we feel from that beautiful revelation—and where feeling is not, knowledge is dead, and a blank the universe. Love is life. The unloving merely breathe. A single sweet beat of the heart is token of something spiritual that will be with us again in Paradise. "O, bliss and beauty! are these our feelings"—thought we once in a dream—"all circling in the sunshine—fair-plumed in a flight of doves!" The vision kept sailing on the sky—"to and fro for our delight"—no sound on their wings more than on their breasts; and they melted away in light as if they were composed of light—and in the hush we heard high-up and far-off music—as of an angel's song.

That was a dream of the mysterious night; but now we are broad awake—and see no emblematical phantoms, but the mere sights of the common day. But sufficient for the day is the beauty thereof—and it inspires us with affection for all beneath the skies. Will the whole world, then, promise henceforth to love us?—and we promise henceforth to love the whole world.

It seems the easiest of all easy things to be kind and good—and then it is so pleasant! "Self-love and social are the same," beyond all question; and in that lies the nobility of our nature. The intensest feeling of self is that of belonging to a brotherhood. All selves then know they have duties which are in truth loves—and loves are joys—whether breathed in silence, or uttered in words, or embodied in actions; and if they filled all life, then all life would be good—and heaven

would be no more than a better earth. And how may all men go to heaven? By making themselves a heaven on earth, and thus preparing their spirits to breathe empyreal air when they have dropped the dust. And how may they make for themselves a heaven on earth? By building up a happy HOME FOR THE HEART. Much, but not all—oh! not nearly all—is in the site. But it must be within the precincts of the holy ground—and within hearing of the waters of life.

Pleasures of Imagination! Pleasures of Memory! Pleasures of Hope! All three most delightful poems; yet all the thoughts and all the feelings that inspired them—ethereal-ised—will not make—FAITH! "The day-spring from on high hath visited us!" Blessed is he who feels that line—nor need his heart die within him, were a voice to be heard at midnight saying—"This New-Year's day shall be thy last!"

One voice—one young voice—all by its sweet, sad, solitary self, singing to us a Christmas Hymn! Listening to that music is like looking at the sky with all its stars.

Was it a spirit?

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walk unseen,
> Sole or responsive to each other's voice,
> Hymning their great Creator."

No, the singer, like ourselves, is mortal; and in that thought, to our hearts, lies the pathos of her prayers. The angels, veiling their faces with their wings, sing in their bliss hallelujahs round the throne of heaven; but she—a poor child of clay, with her face veiled but with the shades of humility and contrition, while

> "Some natural tears she drops, but wipes them soon,"—

sings, in her sorrow, supplications to be suffered to see afar-off its everlasting gates—opening not surely for her own sake—for all of woman born are sinful—and even she in what love calls her innocence feels that her fallen being does of itself deserve but to die. The hymn is fading away, liker and liker an echo, and our spirit having lost it in the distance, returns back holier to the heart-hush of home.

The million hunger and thirst after the stronger and darker passions; nothing will go down with them but *the intense*. They are intolerant—or careless—or even ashamed of those

emotions and affections that compose the blessing of our daily life, and give its lustre to the fire on the hearth of every Christian household. Yet, for all that, they are inexperienced in those same stronger and darker passions of which they prate, and know nothing of the import of those pictures of them painted, with background of gloom and foreground of fire, in the works of the truly great masters. The disturbed spirit of such delineations is far beyond the reaches of their souls; and they mistake their own senseless stupor for solemn awe—or their own mere physical excitement for the enthusiasm of imagination soaring through the storm on the wings of intellect. There are such things in "Satan's Invisible World Displayed" in poetry, as strong and dark passions; and they who are acquainted with their origin and end call them *bad* passions; but the good passions are not dark, but bright—and they are strong too, stronger than death or the grave.

All human beings who know how to reap

> "The harvest of a quiet eye,
> That broods and sleeps on its own heart,"

feel, by the touch, the flowers of affection in every handful of beauty they gather up from those fortunate fields on which shines, for ever through all seasons, the sun of life. How soft the leaves! and, as they meet the eye, how fair! Framed, so might it seem, of green dew consolidated into fragrance. Nor do they fade when gently taken from their stalk on its native bed. They flourish for ever if you bruise them not—sensitive indeed; and, if you are so forgetful as to treat them rashly, like those of the plant that bears that name, they shrink, and seem to shrivel for a time—growing pale, as if upbraiding your harshness; but cherished, they are seen to be all of

> "Immortal amaranth, the tree that grows
> Fast by the throne of God;"

for the seeds have fallen from heaven to earth, and for eighteen hundred years have been spreading themselves over all soils fit for their reception—and what soil is not fit? Even fit are stony places, and places full of thorns. For they will live and grow there in spite of such obstruction—and among rank and matted weeds will often be seen peering out like primroses gladdening the desert.

That voice again—"One of old Scotland's songs, so sad and slow!" Her heart is now blamelessly with things of earth. "Sad and slow!" and most purely sweet. Almost mournful although it be, it breathes of happiness—for the joy dearest to the soul has ever a faint tinge of grief. O innocent enchantress! thou encirclest us with a wavering haze of beautiful imagery, by the spell of that voice awakening after a mood of awe, but for thy own delight. From the long dim tracts of the past come strangely blended recognitions of woe and bliss, undistinguishable now to our own heart—nor knows that heart if it be a dream of imagination or of memory. Yet why should we wonder? In our happiest hours there may have been something in common with our most sorrowful—some shade of sadness cast over them by a passing cloud, that now allies them in retrospect with the sombre spirit of grief; and in our unhappiest hours there may have been gleams of gladness, that seem now to give the return the calm character of peace. Do not all thoughts and feelings, almost all events, seem to resemble each other—when they are dreamt of as all past? All receive a sort of sanctification in the stillness of the time that has gone by—just like the human being whom they adorned or degraded—when they, too, are at last buried together in the bosom of the same earth.

Perhaps none among us ever wrote verses of any worth, who had not been, more or less, readers of our old ballads. All our poets have been so—and even Wordsworth would not have been the veritable and only Wordsworth, had he not in boyhood pored—oh, the miser!—over Percy's "Reliques." From the highest to the humblest, they have all drunk from those silver springs. Shepherds and herdsmen and woodsmen have been the masters of the mighty—their strains have, like the voice of a solitary lute, inspired a power of sadness into the hearts of great poets that gave their genius to be prevalent over all tears, or with a power of sublimity that gave it dominion over all terror, like the sound of a trumpet. "The Babes in the Wood!" "Chevy Chace!" Men become women while they weep—

"Or start up heroes from the glorious strain."

Sing then "The Dirge," my Margaret, to the Old Man, "so tender and so true" to the spirit of those old ballads, which one might think were written by Pity's self.

DIRGE.

"O dig a grave, and dig it deep,
Where I and my true love may sleep!
We'll dig a grave, and dig it deep,
Where thou and thy true love shall sleep!

And let it be five fathom low,
Where winter winds may never blow!—
And it shall be five fathom low,
Where winter winds shall never blow!

And let it be on yonder hill,
Where grows the mountain daffodil!—
And it shall be on yonder hill,
Where grows the mountain daffodil!

And plant it round with holy briers,
To fright away the fairy fires!—
We'll plant it round with holy briers!
To fright away the fairy fires!

And set it round with celandine,
And nodding heads of columbine!—
We'll set it round with celandine,
And nodding heads of columbine!

And let the ruddock build his nest
Just above my true love's breast!—
The ruddock he shall build his nest
Just above thy true love's breast!

And warble his sweet wintry song
O'er our dwelling all day long!
And he shall warble his sweet song
O'er your dwelling all day long.

Now, tender friends, my garments take,
And lay me out for Jesus' sake!
And we will now thy garments take,
And lay thee out for Jesus' sake!

And lay me by my true love's side,
That I may be a faithful bride!—
We'll lay thee by thy true love's side,
That thou may'st be a faithful bride!"

Ay—ay—thou too art gone, WILLIAM STANLEY ROSCOE! What years have flown since we walked among the "alleys green" of Allerton with thee and thy illustrious father! and who ever conversed with him for a few hours in and about his own home—where the stream of life flowed on so full and clear—without carrying away impressions that never seemed to be remembrances—so vivid have they remained amidst the obscurations and obliterations of Time, that sweeps with his wings all that lies on the surface, but has no power to disturb, much less destroy, the record printed on the heart.

We are all of us getting old—or older; nor would we, for our own part—if we could—renew our youth. Methinks the river of life is nobler as it nears the sea. The young are dancing in their skiffs on the pellucid shallows near the source on the Sacred Mountains of the Golden East. They whose lot it is to be in their prime, are dropping down the longer and wider reaches, that seem wheeling by with their sylvan amphitheatres, as if the beauty were moving mornwards, while the voyagers are stationary among the shadows, or slowly descending the stream to meet the meridian day. Many forget

"The torrent's smoothness ere it dash below,"

and are lost in the roaring whirlpool. Under Providence, we see ourselves on the river expanded into a sea-like lake, or arm of the sea; and for all our soul has escaped and suffered, we look up to the stars in gratitude—and down to the stars—for the water too is full of stars as well as the sky—faint and dim indeed—but blended by the pervading spirit of beauty, with the brighter and bolder luminaries reposing on infinitude.

OUR WINTER QUARTERS.

Buchanan Lodge—for a few months—farewell! 'Tis the Twelfth of November; and for the City we leave thee not without reluctance, early in March by the blessing of Heaven again to creep into thy blooming bourne. Yet now and then we shall take a drive down, to while away a sunny forenoon among thy undecaying evergreens, to breathe the balm of thy Christmas roses, and for one *Gentle* bosom to cull the earliest crocuses that may be yellowing through the thin snows of Spring.

In truth, we know not well why we should ever leave thee, for thou art the Darling of all the Seasons; and Winter, so churlish elsewhere, is ever bland to thee, and, daily alighting in these gardens, loves to fold and unfold, in the cool sunshine, the stainless splendour of his pale-plumaged wings. But we are no hermit. Dear to us though Nature be, here, hand-in-hand with Art walking through our peaceful but not unpeopled Policy, a voice comes to us from the city-heart—winning us away from the stillness of solitude into the stir of life. Milton speaks of a region

> "Above the stir and smoke of this dim spot,
> Which men call earth;"

and oft have we visited it; but while yet we pursue the ends of this our mortal being, in the mystery of the brain whence ideas arise, and in the mystery of the heart whence emotions flow—kindred and congenial all—thought ever blending with feeling, reason with imagination, and conscience with passion —'tis our duty to draw our delight from intercommunion with the spirit of our kind. Weakest or wickedest of mortals are your soul-sick, life-loathing, world-wearied men. In solitude

we are prone to be swallowed up in selfishness; and out of selfishness what sins and crimes may not grow! At the best, moral stagnation ensues—and the spirit becomes, like "a green-mantled pool," the abode of reptiles. Then ever welcome to us be living faces, and living voices, the light and the music of reality—dearer far than any mere ideas or emotions hanging or floating aloof by themselves in the atmosphere of imagination. Blest be the cordial grasp of the hand of friendship—blest the tender embrace of the arms of love! Nay, smile not, fair reader, at an old man's fervour; for Love is a gracious spirit, who deserteth not declining age.

The Drosky is at the door—and, my eye! what a figure is Peter! There he sits, like a bear, with the ribbons in his paws—no part visible of his human face or form divine, but his small red eyes—and his ruby nose, whose re-grown enormity laughs at Liston. One little month ago, the knife of that skilful chirurgeon pared it down to the dimensions of a Christian proboscis. Again 'tis like a wart on a frost-reddened Swedish turnip. Pretty Poll, with small delicate pale features, sits beside him like a snowdrop. How shaggy since he returned from our last Highland tour is Filho da Puta! His mane long as his tail—and the hair on his ears like that on his fetlocks. He absolutely reminds us of Hogg's Bonassus. Ay, bless these patent steps—on the same principle as those by which we ascend our nightly couch—we are self-deposited in our Drosky. Oh! the lazy luxury of an air-seat! We seem to be sitting on nothing but a voluptuous warmth, restorative as a bath. And then what furry softness envelopes our feet! Yes—Mrs Gentle—Mrs Gentle—thy Cashmere shawl, twined round our bust, feels almost as silken-smooth as thine own, and scented is it with the balm of thy own lips. Boreas blows on it tenderly as a zephyr—and the wintry sunshine seems summery as it plays on the celestial colours. Thy pelisse, too, over our old happy shoulders, purple as the neck of the dove when careering round his mate. Thy comforter, too, in our bosom—till the dear, delightful, delicious, wicked worsted thrills through skin and flesh to our very heart. It dirls. Drive away, Peter. Farewell Lodge—and welcome, in a jiffy, Moray Place.

And now, doucely and decently sitting in our Drosky, behold us driven by Peter, proud as Punch to tool along the

staring streets the great-grandson of the Desert-born! Yet—yet—couldst thou lead the field, Filho, with old Kit Castor on thy spine. But though our day be not quite gone by, we think we see the stealing shades of eve, and, a little further on in the solemn vista, the darkness of night; and therefore, like wise children of nature, not unproud of the past, not ungrateful for the present, and unfearful of the future, thus do we now skim along the road of life, broad and smooth to our heart's content, able to pay the turnpikes, and willing, when we shall have reached the end of our journey, to lie down, in hope, at the goal.

What pretty, little, low lines of garden-fronted cottages! leading us along out of rural into suburban cheerfulness, across the Bridge, and past the Oriental-looking Oil-Gas Works, with a sweep winding into the full view of Pitt Street (what a glorious name!) steep as some straight cliff-glen, and an approach truly majestic—yea, call it at once magnificent—right up to the great city's heart. "There goes Old Christopher North!" the bright boys in the playground of the New Academy exclaim. God bless you, you little rascals!—We could almost find it in our heart to ask the Rector for a holiday. But, under him, all your days are holidays—for when the precious hours of study are enlightened by a classic spirit, how naturally do they melt into those of play!

"Gay hope is yours, by fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
The sunshine of the breast;
Yours buxom health, of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever new,
And lively cheer, of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
That fly th' approach of morn."

Descending from our Drosky, we find No. 99 Moray Place, exhibiting throughout all its calm interior the self-same expression it wore the day we left it for the Lodge, eight months ago. There is our venerable winter Hat—as like Ourselves, it is said, as he can stare—sitting on the Circular in the Entrance-hall. Everything has been tenderly dusted

as if by hands that touched with a Sabbath feeling; and though the furniture cannot be said to be new, yet while it is in all sobered, it is in nothing faded. You are at first unaware of its richness on account of its simplicity—its grace is felt gradually to grow out of its comfort—and that which you thought but ease lightens into elegance, while there is but one image in nature which can adequately express its repose —that of a hill-sheltered field by sunset, under a fresh-fallen vest of virgin snow. For then snow blushes with a faint crimson—nay, sometimes when Sol is extraordinarily splendid, not faint, but with a gorgeousness of colouring that fears not to face in rivalry the western clouds.

Let no man have two houses with one set of furniture. Home's deepest delight is undisturbance. Some people think no articles fixtures—not even grates. But sofas and ottomans, and chairs and footstools, and screens—and above all, beds— all are fixtures in the dwelling of a wise man, cognoscitive and sensitive of the blessings of this life. Each has its own place assigned to it by the taste, tact, and feeling of the master of the mansion, where order and elegance minister to comfort, and comfort is but a homely word for happiness. In various moods we vary their arrangement—nor is even the easiest of all Easy-chairs secure for life against being gently pushed on his wheels from chimney-nook to window-corner, when the sunshine may have extinguished the fire, and the blue sky tempts the *Paterfamilias*, or him who is but an uncle, to lie back with half-shut eyes, and gaze upon the cheerful purity, even like a shepherd on the hill. But these little occasional disarrangements serve but to preserve the spirit of permanent arrangement, without which the very virtue of domesticity dies. What sacrilege, therefore, against the Lares and Penates, to turn a whole house topsy-turvy, from garret to cellar, regularly as May-flowers deck the zone of the year! Why, a Turkey or a Persian, or even a Wilton or a Kidderminster carpet, is as much the garb of the wooden floor inside, as the grass is of the earthen floor outside of your house. Would you lift and lay down the greensward? But without further illustration—be assured the cases are kindred—and so, too, with sofas and shrubs, tent-beds and trees. Independently, however, of these analogies, not fanciful, but lying deep in the nature of things, the inside of one's tabernacle, in

town and country, ought ever to be sacred from all radical revolutionary movements, and to lie for ever in a waking dream of graceful repose. All our affections towards lifeless things become tenderer and deeper in the continuous and unbroken flow of domestic habit. The eye gets lovingly familiarised with each object occupying its own peculiar and appropriate place, and feels in a moment when the most insignificant is missing or removed. We say not a word about children, for fortunately, since we are yet unmarried, we have none; but even they, if brought up Christians, are no dissenters from this creed, and however rackety in the nursery, in an orderly-kept parlour or drawing-room how like so many pretty little white mice do they glide cannily along the floor! Let no such horror, then, as a *flitting* ever befall us or our friends! O mercy! only look at a long huge train of waggons, heaped up to the windows of the first floors, moving along the dust-driving or mire-choked streets with furniture from a gutted town-house towards one standing in the rural shades with an empty stomach! All is dimmed or destroyed—chairs crushed on the table-land, and four-posted beds lying helplessly with their astonished feet up to heaven —a sight that might make the angels weep!

People have wondered why we, an old barren bachelor, should live in such a large house. It is a palace; but never was there a greater mistake than to seek the solution in our pride. Silence can be had but in a large house. And silence is the chief condition of home happiness. We could now hear a leaf fall—a leaf of the finest wire-wove. Peter and Betty, Polly and the rest, inhabit the second sunk story—and it is delightful to know that they may be kicking up the most infernal disturbance at this blessed moment, and tearing out each other's hair in handfuls, without the faintest whisper of the uproar reaching us in our altitude above the drawing-room flat. On New-Year's Day morning there is regularly a competition of bagpipers in the kitchen, and we could fondly imagine 'tis an Eolian Harp. In his pantry Peter practised for years on the shrill clarion, and for years on the echoing horn; yet had he thrown up both instruments in despair of perfection ere we so much as knew that he had commenced his musical studies. In the sunk story, immediately below *that*, having been for a season consumptive, we kept a Jenny

ass and her daughter—and though we believe it was not unheard around Moray and Ainslie Places, and even in Charlotte Square, we cannot charge our memory with an audit of their bray. In the sunk story immediately below that again, that distinguished officer on half-pay, Captain Campbell of the Highlanders—when on a visit to us for a year or two—though we seldom saw him—got up a *Sma' still*—and though a more harmless creature could not be, there he used to sit for hours together, with the worm that never dies. On one occasion, it having been supposed by Peter that the Captain had gone to the East Neuk of Fife, weeks elapsed, we remember, ere he was found sitting dead, just as if he had been alive, in his usual attitude in his arm-chair, commanding a view of the precipice of the back court.

Just as quiet are the Attics. They, too, are furnished; for the feeling of there being one unfurnished room, however small, in the largest house, disturbs the entire state of mind of such an occupant, and when cherished and dwelt on, which it must not unfrequently be, inspires a cold air of desolation throughout the domicile, till "thoughts of flitting rise." There is no lumber-room. The room containing Blue-Beard's murdered wives might in idea be entered without distraction by a bold mind.—But oh! the lumber-room, into which, on an early walk through the house of a friend on whom we had been sorning, all unprepared did we once set our foot! From the moment—and it was but for a moment, and about six o'clock—far away in the country—that appalling vision met our eyes—till we found ourselves, about another six o'clock, in Moray Place, we have no memory of the flight of time. Part of the journey—or voyage—we suspect, was performed in a steamer. The noise of knocking, and puffing, and splashing seems to be in our inner ears; but after all it may have been a sail-boat, possibly a yacht!—In the Attics an Aviary open to the sky. And to us below, the many voices, softened into one sometimes in the pauses of severer thought, are sometimes very affecting, so serenely sweet it seems, as the lave-rock's in our youth at the gates of heaven.

At our door stand the Guardian Genii, Sleep and Silence. We had an ear to them in the building of our house, and planned it after a long summer day's perusal of the "Castle of Indolence." O Jemmy Thomson! Jemmy Thomson!—O that

thou and we had been rowers in the same boat on the silent river! Rowers, indeed! Short the spells and far between that we should have taken—the one would not have turned round the other, but when the oar chanced to drop out of his listless hand—and the canoe would have been allowed to drift with the stream, unobservant we of our backward course, and wondering and then ceasing to wonder at the slow-receding beauty of the hanging banks of grove—the cloud-mountains, immovable as those of earth, and in spirit one world.

Ay! Great noise as we have made in the world—our heart's desire is for silence—its delight is in peace. And is it not so with all men, turbulent as may have been their lives, who have ever looked into their own being? The soul longs for peace in itself; therefore, wherever it discerns it, it rejoices in the image of which it seeks the reality. The serene human countenance, the wide water sleeping in the moonlight, the stainless marble-depth of the immeasurable heavens, reflect to it that tranquillity which it imagines within itself, though it never long dwelt there, restless as a dove on a dark tree that cannot be happy but in the sunshine. It loves to look on what it loves, even though it cannot possess it; and hence its feeling, on contemplating such calm, is not of simple repose, but desire stirs in it, as if it would fain blend itself more deeply with the quiet it beholds! The sleep of a desert would not so affect it; it is Beauty that makes the difference—that attracts spirit to matter, while spirit becomes not thereby materialised—but matter spiritualised; and we fluctuate in the air-boat of imagination between earth and heaven. In most and in all great instances there is apprehension, dim and faint, or more distinct, of pervasion of a spirit throughout that which we conceive Beautiful. Stars, the moon, the deep bright ether, waters, the rainbow, a pure lovely flower—none of them ever appear to us, or are believed by us to be mere physical and unconscious dead aggregates of atoms. That is what they are; but we could have no pleasure in them, if we knew them as such. There is illusion, then, of some sort, and to what does it amount? We cannot well tell. But if there is really a love in human hearts to these distant orbs—if there is an emotion of tenderness to the fair, opening, breathing blossom that we would not crush it—"in gentleness of heart touch, for there is a spirit in the leaves"—it must be that we

do not see them as they are, but "create a soul under the ribs of death." We could not be touched, or care for what has no affinity to ourselves—we make the affinity—we animate, we vivify them, and thenceforward,

> "Spiritus intus alit, totamque infusa per artus,
> Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet."

Now you do believe that we do love Silence—and every other thing worthy to be loved—you and yours—and even that romp, your shock-headed Coz, to whom Priscilla Tomboy was an Imogen.

All our ceilings are deadened—we walk ankle-deep in carpeting—nobody is suffered to open a door but ourselves—and they are so constructed, that it is out of their power to *slam*. Our winter furniture is all massy—deepening the repose. In all the large rooms two fireplaces—and fires are kept perpetually burning day and night, in them all, which, reflected from spacious mirrors, give the mansion quite the appearance of a Pandemonium. *Not gas always.* Palm-oil burns scentless as moonlight; and when motion, not rest, in a place is signified, we accompany ourselves with a wax candle, or taper from time immemorial green. Yet think not that there is a blaze of light. We have seen the midnight heaven and earth nearly as bright, with but one moon and a small scatter of stars. And places of glimmer—and places of gloom—and places "deaf to sound and blind to light" there are in this our mansion, known but to ourselves—cells—penitentiaries—where an old man may sit sighing and groaning, or stupified in his misery—or at times almost happy. So senseless, and worse than senseless, seems then all mortal tribulation and anguish, while the self-communing soul is assured, by its own profound responses, that "whatever is, is best."

And thus is our domicile a domain—a kingdom. We should not care to be confined to it all the rest of our days. Seldom, indeed, do we leave our own door—yet call on us, and ten to one you hear us in winter chirping like a cricket, or in summer like a grasshopper. We have the whole range of the house to ourselves, and many an Excursion make we on the Crutch. Ascending and descending the wide-winding staircases, each broad step not above two inches high, we find ourselves on spacious landing-places illumined by the dim

religious light of stained windows, on which pilgrims, and palmers, and prophets, single or in pairs or troops, are travelling on missions through glens or forests or by sea-shores—or shepherd piping in the shade, or poet playing with the tangles of Neæra's hair. We have discovered a new principle on which, within narrow bounds, we have constructed Panoramic Dioramas, that show splendid segments of the great circle of the world. We paint all of them ourselves—now a Poussin, now a Thomson, now a Claude, now a Turner, now a Rubens, now a Danby, now a Salvator, now a Maclise.

Most people, nay, we suspect all people but ourselves, make a point of sleeping in the same bed (that is awkwardly expressed) all life through; and out of that bed many of them avow their inability to "bow an eye;" such is the power of custom, of habit, of use and wont, over weary mortals even in the blessing of sleep. No such slavish fidelity do we observe towards any one bed of the numerous beds in our mansion. No one dormitory is entitled to plume itself, in the pride of its heart, on being peculiarly Ours; nor is any one suffered to sink into despondency from being debarred the privilege of contributing to Our repose. They are all furnished, if not luxuriously, comfortably in the extreme; in number, nine—each, of course, with its two dressing-rooms—those on the same story communicating with one another, and with the parlours, drawing-rooms, and libraries—"a mighty maze, but not without a plan," and all harmoniously combined by one prevailing and pervading spirit of quietude by day and by night, awake or asleep—the chairs being couch-like, the couches bed-like, the beds, whether tent or canopy, enveloped in a drapery of dreams.

We go to bed at no stated hour—but when we are tired of sitting up, then do we lie down; at any time of the night or the day; and we rise, neither with the lark, nor the swallow, nor the sparrow, nor the cock, nor the owl, nor the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor Lucifer, nor Aurora, but with Christopher North. Yellow, or green, or blue, or crimson, or fawn, or orange, or pinky light salutes our eyes, as sleep's visionary worlds recede and relapse into airy nothing, and as we know of a certainty that *these* are real web-and-woof damask curtains, *that* flock palpable on substantial walls.

True wisdom soon accommodates itself even to involuntary

or inevitable change—but to that which flows from our own sweet will, however sudden and strong, it instantly moulds itself in a novel delight, with all its familiar and domestic habits. Why, we have not been in 99 Moray Place for a week—nay, not for two days and nights—till you might swear we had been all our life a Cit, we look so like a Native. The rustic air of the Lodge has entirely left us, and all our movements are metropolitan. You see before you a Gentleman of the Old School, who knows that the eyes of the town are upon him when he seeks the open air, and who preserves, even in the privacy of the parlour, that dignity of dress and demeanour which, during winter, befits his age, his rank, and his character. Now, we shave every morning; John, who in his boyish days served under Barbarossa, lightly passes the comb through our "sable silvered;" and then, in our shawl dressing-gown, we descend about ten to our study, and sit, not unstately, beside the hissing urn at our protracted breakfast. In one little month or less, "or ere our shoes are old," we feel as if we had belonged to *this* house alone, and it to us, from our birth. The Lodge is seen to be standing in its stillness, far away! Dear memories of the pensive past now and then come floating upon the cheerful present—like birds of fairest plumage floating far inland from the main. But there is no idle longing—no vain regret. This, we say, is true wisdom. For each scene and season—each pleasure and place—ought to be trusted to itself in the economy of human life, and to be allowed its own proper power over our spirit. People in the country are often restless to return to town—and people in town unhappy till they rush away into the country—thus cheating their entire existence out of its natural calm and satisfaction. Not so we. We give both their due—and that due is an almost undivided delight in each while we live under its reign. For Nature, believe us, is no jealous mistress. She is an affectionate wife, who, being assured of his fidelity, is not afraid to trust her husband out of her sight,

"When still the town affairs do call him thence,"

and who waits with cheerful patience for his return, duly welcomed with a conjugal shower of smiles and kisses.

But what is this we see before us? Winter—we declare—and in full fig with his powdered wig! On the mid-day

of November, absolutely snow! a full, fair, and free fall of indisputable snow.

Not the slightest idea had we, the day before, that a single flake had yet been formed in the atmosphere, which, on closing of our shutters, looked through the clear-obscure, indicative of a still night and a bright morning. But we had not seen the moon. She, we are told by an eyewitness, early in the evening, *stared* from the south-east, "through the misty horizontal air," with a face of portentous magnitude and brazen hue, symptomatic, so weatherwise seers do say, of the approach of the Snow-king. On such occasions it requires all one's astronomical science to distinguish between sun and moon; for then sister resembles brother in that wan splendour, and you wonder for a moment, as the large beamless orb (how unlike Dian's silver bow!) is in ascension, what can have brought the lord of day, at this untimeous hour, from his sea-couch behind the mountains of the west. Yet during the night-calm we suspected snow—for the hush of the heavens had that downy feel, to our half-sleeping fancy, that belongs to the eider-pillow in which disappears our aged, honcured, and un-nightcap'd head. Looking out by peep of day—rather a ghostlike appearance in our long night-shirt, which trails a regal train—we beheld the fair feathers dimly descending through the glimmer, while momently the world kept whitening and whitening, till we knew not our home-returning white cat on what was yesterday the back-*green*, but by the sable tail that singularly shoots from the rump of that phenomenon. We were delighted. Into the cold plunge-bath we played plop like a salmon—and came out as red as a cut of that incomparable fish. One ply of leather—one of flannel—and one of the linen fine; and then the suit of pepper-and-salt over all; and you behold us welcoming, hailing, and blessing the return of day. Frost, too, felt at the finger and toe tips—and in unequivocal true-blue at the point, Pensive Public, of thy Grecian or Roman nose. Furs, at once, are all the rage; the month of muffs has come; and round the neck of Eve, and every one of all her daughters, is seen harmlessly coiling a boa-constrictor. On their lovely cheeks the Christmas roses are already in full blow, and the heart of Christopher North sings aloud for joy. Furred, muffed, and boa'd, Mrs Gentle adventures abroad in the blast; and, shouldering

his Crutch, the rough, ready, and ruddy old man shows how widows are won, whispers in that delicate ear of the publication of bans, and points his gouty toe towards the hymeneal altar. In the bracing air, his frame is strung like Paganini's fiddle, and he is felt to be irresistible in the *piggicato*. "Lord of his presence, and small land beside," what cares he even for a knight of the Guelphic order? On his breast shines a star—may it never prove a cross—beyond bestowal by king or kaisar; nor is Maga's self jealous or envious of these wedded loves. And who knows but that ere another November snow sheets the Shotts, a curious little Kit, with the word North distinctly traceable in blue letters on the whites of his eyes, may not be playing antics on his mother's knee, and with the true Tory face in miniature, smiling upon the guardian of the merry fellow's own and his country's constitution?

What kind of a Winter—we wonder—are we to have in the way of wind and weather? We trust it will be severe. As summer set in with his usual severity, Winter must not be behindhand with him; but after an occasional week's rain of a commendably boisterous character, must come out in full fig of frost. He has two suits which we greatly admire, combining the splendour of a court-dress with the strength of a work-day garb — we mean his garments of black and his garments of white frost. He looks best in the former, we think, on to about Christmas—and the latter become the old gentleman well from that festival season, on to about the day sacred to a class of persons who will never read our Recreations.

Of all the months of the year, November—in our climate—whether in town or country, bears the worst character. He is almost universally thought to be a sour, sulky, sullen, savage, dim, dull, dark, disconsolate, yet designing month—in fewer words, a month scarcely fit to live. Abhorring all personalities, we repent having sometimes given in to this national abuse of November. We know him well—and though we admit at once that he is no beauty, and that his manners are at the best bluff, at the worst repulsive, yet on those who choose to cultivate his acquaintance, his character continues so to mellow and ameliorate itself, that they come at last, if not to love, to like him, and even to prefer his company "in the season of the year," to that of other more brilliant visitors. So true is it with months and men, that it requires only to

know the most unpleasant of them, and to see them during a favourable phasis, in order to regard them with that Christian complacency which a good heart sheds over all its habits. 'Tis unlucky for November—poor fellow!—that he follows October. October is a month so much admired by the world, that we often wonder he has not been spoiled. "What a glorious October!" "Why, you will surely not leave us till October comes!" "October is the month of all months—and, till you see him, you have not seen the Lakes." We acknowledge his claims. He is often truly delightful; but, like other brilliant persons, thinks himself not only privileged to be at times extremely dull, but his intensest stupidity is panegyrised as wit of the first water—while his not unfrequent rudeness, of which many a common month would be ashamed, passes for the ease of high birth or the eccentricity of genius. A very different feeling indeed exists towards unfortunate November. The moment he shows his face, all other faces are glum. We defy month or man, under such a trial, to make himself even tolerably agreeable. He feels that he is no favourite, and that a most sinister misinterpretation will be put on all his motions, manners, thoughts, words, and deeds. A man or a month so circumstanced is much to be pitied. Think, look, speak, act as he will—yea, even more like an angel than a man or a month—every eyebrow arches—every nostril distends—every lip curls towards him in contempt, while blow over the ice that enchains all his feelings and faculties, heavy-chill whisperings of "who is that disagreeable fellow?" In such a frozen atmosphere, eloquence would be congealed on the lips of an Ulysses—Poetry prosified on those of an Apollo.

Edinburgh, during the dead of Summer, is a far more solitary place than Glenetive, Glenevis, or Glenco. There is not, however, so much danger of being lost in it as in the Moor of Rannoch—for streets and squares, though then utterly tenantless, are useful as landmarks to the pilgrim passing through what seems to be

"A still forsaken City of the Dead!"

But, like a frost-bound river suddenly dissolved by a strong thaw, and coming down in spate from the mountains to the

low lands, about the beginning of November life annually re-overflows our metropolis, with a noise like "the rushing of many chariots." The streets, that for months had been like the stony channels of dried-up streams—only not quite so well paved—are again all a-murmur, and people addicted to the study of political economy begin to hold

"Each strange tale devoutly true"

in the Malthusian theory of population. What swarms keep hovering round the great Northern Hive! Add eke after eke to the skep, and still seems it too small to contain all the insects. Edinburgh is almost as large as London. Nay, don't stare! We speak comparatively; and as England is somewhere about six times more populous than Scotland, you may, by brushing up your arithmetic, and applying to the Census, discover that we are not so far wrong in our apparent paradox.

Were November in himself a far more wearifu' month than he is, Edinburgh would nevertheless be gladsome in the midst of all his gloom, even as a wood in May with the Gathering of the Clans. The country flows into the town—all its life seems to do so—and to leave nothing behind but the bare trees and hedges. Equipages again go glittering along all the streets, squares, circuses, and crescents; and one might think that the entire "nation of ladies and gentlemen"—for King George the Fourth, we presume, meant to include the sex in his compliment—were moving through their metropolis. Amusement and business walk hand-in-hand — you hardly know, from their cheerful countenances, which is which; for the Scots, though a high-cheeked, are not an ill-favoured folk in their features—and though their mouths are somewhat of the widest, their teeth are white as well as sharp, and on the opening of their ruddy lips, their ivory-cases are still further brightened by hearty smiles. 'Twould be false to say that their figures are distinguished by an air of fashion—for we have no court, and our nobles are almost all absentees. But though, in one sense, the men are ugly customers, as they will find

"Who chance to tread upon their freeborn toe,"

yet, literally, they are a comely crew, and if formed into battalions in marching order, would make the National Guard in Paris look like

"That small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes."

Our females have figures that can thaw any frost; and 'tis universally allowed that they walk well, though their style of pedestrianism does not so readily recall to the imagination Virgil's picture of Camilla flying along the heads of corn without touching their ears, as the images of paviers with post-looking mallets driving down dislodged stones into the streets. Intermingling with the lighter and more elastic footsteps of your Southron dames, the ongoings of our native virgins produce a pleasant variety of motion in the forenoon mêlée that along the Street of Princes now goes nodding in the sun-glint.

"Amid the general dance and minstrelsy"

who would wear a long face, unless it were in sympathy with his length of ears? A din of multitudinous joy hums in the air; you cannot see the city for the houses, its inhabitants for the people; and as for finding one particular acquaintance in the crowd, why, to use an elegant simile, you might as well go search for a needle in a bottle of hay.

But hark! a hollow sound, distant, and as yet referred to no distinct place—then a faint mixture of a clear chime that is almost music—now a tune—and at last, rousing the massy multitude to enthusiasm, a military march, swelling various, profound, and high, with drum, trombone, serpent, trump, clarionet, fife, flute, and cymbal, bringing slowly on (is it the measured tramp of the feet of men, or the confused trampling of horses?) banners floating over the procession, above the glitter of steel, and the golden glow of helmets. 'Tis a regiment of cavalry—hurra! the Carbineers! What an Advanced Guard!

"There England sends her men, of men the chief,"

still, staid, bold, bronzed faces, with keen eyes, looking straight forward from between sabres; while beneath the equable but haughty motion of their steeds, almost disciplined as their riders, with long black horse-hair flowing in martial majesty, nod their high Roman casques. The sweet storm of music

has been passing by while we were gazing, and is now somewhat deadened by the retiring distance and by that mass of buildings (how the windows are alive, and agaze with faces!) while troop after troop comes on, still moving, it is felt by all, to the motion of the warlike tune, though now across the Waterloo Bridge sounding like an echo, till the glorious war-pageant is all gone by, and the dull day is deadened down again into the stillness and silence of an ignoble peace.

"Now all the youth of Scotland are on fire!"

All her cities and towns are rejoicing in the welcome Winter; and mind, invigorated by holidays, is now at work, like a giant refreshed, in all professions. The busy bar growls, grumphs, squeaks, like an old sow with a litter of pigs pretending to be quarrelling about straws. Enter the Outer or the Inner House, and you hear eloquence that would have put Cicero to the blush, and reduced Demosthenes to his original stutter. The wigs of the Judges seem to have been growing during the long vacation, and to have expanded into an ampler wisdom. Seldom have we seen a more solemn set of men. Every one looks more *gash* than another, and those three in the centre seem to us the embodied spirits of Law, Equity, and Justice. What can be the meaning of all this endless litigation? On what immutable principles in human nature depends the prosperity of the Fee-fund? Life is strife. Inestimable the blessing of the great institution of Property! For without it, how could people go together by the ears, as if they would tear one another to pieces? All the strong, we must not call them bad passions, denied their natural element, would find out some channels to run in, far more destructive to the commonweal than lawsuits, and the people would be reduced to the lowest ebb of misery, and raised to the highest flow of crime. Our Parliament House here is a vast safety-valve for the escape of the foul steam that would otherwise explode and shatter the engine of the State, blowing the body and members of society to smash. As it is, how the engine works! There it goes! like Erickson's Novelty or Stephenson's Rocket along a railroad; and though an accident may occur now and then, such as an occasional passenger chucked by some uncalculated collision into the distant horizon, to be picked up whole, or in fragments, by the hoers in some turnip-field in the adjacent

county, yet few or none are likely to be fatal on a great scale; and on goes the Novelty or Rocket, like a thought, with many weighty considerations after it, in the shape of waggons of Christians or cottons, while Manufactures and Commerce exult in the cause of Liberty and Locomotion all over the world.

But to us utter idlesse is perfect bliss. And why? Because, like a lull at sea, or *lown* on land, it is felt to descend from Heaven on man's toilsome lot. The lull and the lown, what are they when most profound, but the transient cessation of the restlessness of winds and waters—a change wrought for an hour of peace in the heart of the hurricane! Therefore the sailor enjoys it on the green wave—the shepherd on the greensward; while the memory of mists and storms deepens the enchantment. Even so, Idlesse can be enjoyed but by those who are permitted to indulge it, while enduring the labours of an active or a contemplative life. To use another, and a still livelier image—see the pedlar toiling along the dusty road, with an enormous pack, on his excursion; and when off his aching shoulders slowly falls back on the bank the loosened load, in blessed relief think ye not that he enjoys, like a very poet, the beauty of the butterflies that, wavering through the air, settle down on the wildflowers around him that embroider the wayside! Yet our pedlar is not so much either of an entomologist or a botanist as not to take out his scrip, and eat his bread and cheese with a mute prayer and a munching appetite—not idle, it must be confessed, in that sense—but in every other idle even as the shadow of the sycamore, beneath which, with his eyes half-open—for by hypothesis he is a Scotsman—he finally sinks into a wakeful, but quiet half-sleep. "Hallo! why are you sleeping there, you *idle* fellow?" bawls some beadle, or some overseer, or some magistrate, or perhaps merely one of those private persons who, out of season and in season, are constantly sending the sluggard to the ant to learn wisdom—though the ant, Heaven bless her! at proper times sleeps as sound as a sick-nurse.

We are now the idlest, because once were we the most industrious of men. Up to the time that we engaged to take an occasional glance over the self-growing sheets of The Periodical, we were tied to one of the oars that move along

the great vessel of life; and we believe that it was allowed by all the best watermen, that

"We feather'd our oars with skill and dexterity."

But ever since we became an Editor, our repose, bodily and mental, has been like that of a Hindoo god. Often do we sit whole winter nights, leaning back on our chair, more like the image of a man than a man himself, with shut eyes, that keep seeing in succession all the things that ever happened to us, and all the persons that we ever loved, hated, or despised, embraced, beat, or insulted, since we were a little boy. They too have all an image-like appearance, and 'tis wondrous strange how silent they all are, actors and actresses on the stage of that revived drama, which sometimes seems to be a genteel comedy, and sometimes a broad farce, and then to undergo dreadful transfiguration into a tragedy deep as death.

We presume that the Public read in her own papers—we cannot be but hurt that no account of it has appeared in the "Court Journal"—that on Thursday the 12th current, No. 99 Moray Place was illuminated by our annual Soirée, Conversazione, Rout, Ball, and Supper. A Ball! yes—for Christopher North, acting in the spirit of his favourite James Thomson,—

"No purpose gay,
Amusement, dance, or song he sternly scorns;
For happiness and true philosophy
Are of the social, still, and smiling kind."

All the rooms in the house were thrown open, except the cellars and the Sanctum. To the people congregated outside, the building, we have been assured, had all the brilliancy of the Bude Light. It was like a palace of light, of which the framework or skeleton was of white unveined marble. So strong was the reflection on the nocturnal heavens, that a rumour ran through the City that there was a great fire in Moray Place, nor did it subside till after the arrival and departure of several engines. The alarm of some huge conflagration prevailed during most part of the night all over the kingdom of Fife; while, in the Lothians, our illumination was much admired as an uncommonly fine specimen of the Aurora Borealis.

> "From the arch'd roof,
> Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
> Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
> With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
> As from a sky. The hasty multitude
> Admiring enter'd."

We need not say who received the company, and with what grace SHE did so, standing at the first landing-place of the great staircase in sable stole; for the widow's weeds have not *yet* been doffed for the robes of saffron—with a Queen-Mary cap pointed in the front of her serene and ample forehead, and, to please us, a few pearls sprinkled among her hair, still an unfaded auburn, and on her bosom one star-bright diamond. Had the old General himself come to life again, and beheld her then and there, he could not have been offended with such simple ornaments. The weeds he would have felt due to him, and all that his memory was fairly entitled to; but the flowers —to speak figuratively—he would have cheerfully acknowledged were due to us, and that they well became both face and figure of his lovely relict. As she moved from one room to another, showering around her serene smiles, we felt the dignity of those Virgilian words,

"Incedit Regina."

Surely there is something very poetical in the gradual flowing in of the tide of grace, elegance, and beauty, over the floors of a suite of regal-looking rooms, splendidly illuminated. Each party as it comes on has its own peculiar picturesqueness, and affects the heart or imagination by some novel charm, gently gliding onward a little while by itself, as if not unconscious of its own attractions, nor unproud of the gaze of perhaps critical admiration that attends its progressive movement. We confess ourselves partial to plumes of feathers above the radiant braidings of the silken tresses on the heads of virgins and matrons — provided they be not "dumpy women"—tall, white, blue, and pink plumes, silent in their wavings as gossamer, and as finely delicate, stirred up by your very breath as you bend down to salute their cheeks—not with kisses—for they would be out of order both of time and place—but with words almost as tender as kisses, and awakening almost as tender a return—a few sweet syllables

breathed in a silver voice, with blushing cheeks, and downcast eyes that, when again uplifted, are seen to be from heaven.

A long hour ago, and all the mansion was empty and motionless—with us two alone sitting by each other's side affectionately and respectfully on a sofa. Now it is filled with life, and heard you ever such a happy murmur? Yet no one in particular looks as if he or she were speaking much above breath, so gentle is true refinement, like a delightful fragrance

"From the calm manners quietly exhaled."

Oh! the atrocious wickedness of a great, big, hearty, huge, hulking, horse-laugh, in an assemblage of ladies and gentlemen, gathered gracefully together to enjoy the courtesies, the amenities, the urbanities, and the humanities of cultivated Christian life! The pagan who perpetrates it should be burnt alive—not at a slow fire—though that would be but justice—but at a quick one—that all remnants of him and his enormity may be instantly extinguished. Lord Chesterfield has been loudly laughed at with leathern lungs for his anathema against laughter. But though often wrong, there his lordship was right, and for that one single rule of manners he deserves a monument, as having been one of the benefactors of his species. Let smiles mantle—and that sweet, soft, low sound be heard, the *susurrus*. Let there be a many-voiced quiet music, like that of the summer moonlight sea when the stars are in its breast. But laughter—loud peals of laughter—are like breakers—blind breakers on a blind coast, where no verdure grows except that of tangle, and whatever is made into that vulgarist of all commodities, kelp.

'Tis not a literary conversazione, mind ye, gentle reader; for we leave that to S. T. Coleridge, the Monarch of the Monologue. But all speak—talk—whisper—or smile, of all the speakable, talkable, whisperable, and smileable little interesting affairs, incidents, and occurrences, real or fabulous, of public, private, demi-public, or demi-semi-private life. Topics are as plentiful as snow-flakes, and melt away as fast in the stream of social pleasure,

"A moment white, then gone for ever!"

Not a little scandal—much gossip, we daresay; but as for

scandal, it is the vulgarest error in the world to think that it either means, or does any harm to any mortal. It does infinite good. It ventilates the atmosphere, and prevents the "golden-fretted vault" from becoming "a foul congregation of vapours." As for gossip, what other vindication does it need, than an order for you to look at a soirée of swallows in September on a slate-roof, the most innocent and white-breasted creatures that pay

> "Their annual visits round the globe,
> Companions of the sun,"

but such gossipers that the whole air is a-twitter with their talk about their neighbours' nest—when—whew! off and away they go, winnowing their way westwards, through the setting sunlight, and all in perfect amity with themselves and their kind, while

> "The world is all before them, where to choose,
> And Providence their guide."

And, madam, you do not matronise—and, sir, you do not patronise—*waltzing?* 'Tis very O fie-fieish, you think—and in danger of becoming very, very faux-papa-ish!

> "Oh! the great goodness of the knights of old,"

whose mind-motto was still—

> "*Honi soit qui mal y pense!*"

Judging by ourselves, 'tis a wicked world we unwillingly confess; but be not terrified at trifles, we beseech you, and be not gross in your censure of innocent and delicate delights. Byron's exquisitely sensitive modesty was shocked by the sight of waltzing, which he would not have suffered the Guiccioli, while she was in his keeping, to have indulged in even with her own husband. Thus it is that sinners see sin only where it is not—and shut their eyes to it when it comes upon them open-armed, bare-bosomed, and brazen-faced, and clutches them in a grasp more like the hug of a bear than the embrace of a woman. Away with such mawkish modesty and mouthing morality—for 'tis the slang of the hypocrite. Waltzing does our old eyes good to look on it, when the whole Circling Flight goes gracefully and airily on its orbit,

and we think we see the realisation of that picture (we are sad misquoters) when the Hours—

> "Knit by the Graces and the Loves in dance,
> Lead on the eternal spring!"

But the Circling Flight breaks into airy fragments, the Instrumental Band is hushed, and so is the whole central Drawing-room; for, blushingly obedient to the old man's beck, The Star of Eve—so call we her who is our heart's-ease and heart's-delight—the granddaughter of one whom hopelessly we loved in youth, yet with no unreturned passion—but

> "The course of true love never yet ran smooth"—

comes glidingly to our side, and having heard our wish breathed whisperingly into her ear—a rare feature when small, thin, and delicate as a leaf—just as glidingly she goes, in stature that is almost stateliness, towards her Harp, and assuming at once a posture that would have charmed Canova, after a few prelusive touches that betray the hand of a mistress in the divine art, to the enchantment of the white motions of those graceful arms and fingers fine, awakes a spirit in the strings accordant to the spirit in that voice worthy to have blended with St Cecilia's in her hymning orisons. A Hebrew melody! And now your heart feels the utter mournfulness of these words,

> "By Babel's streams we sat and wept!"

How sudden, yet how unviolent, the transitions among all our feelings! Under no other power so swift and so soft as that of Music. The soul that sincerely loves Music, offers at no time the slightest resistance to her sway, but yields itself up entirely to all its moods and measures, led captive by each successive strain through the whole mysterious world of modulated air. Not a smile over all that hush. Entranced in listening, they are all still as images. A sigh—almost a sob—is heard, and there is shedding of tears. The sweet singer's self seems as if she felt all alone at some solitary shrine—

> "Her face, oh! call it fair, not pale!"

Yet pale now it is, as if her heart almost died within her at

the pathos of her own beautiful lament in a foreign land, and lovelier in her captivity never was the fairest of the daughters of Zion!

How it howls! That was a very avalanche. The snow-winds preach charity to all who have roofs overhead—towards the houseless and them who huddle round hearths where the fire is dying or dead. Those blankets must have been a God-send indeed to not a few families, and your plan is preferable to a Fancy-Fair. Yet that is good too—nor do we find fault with them who dance for the Destitute. We sanction amusements that give relief to misery—and the wealthy may waltz unblamed for behoof of the poor.

Again, what a howling in the chimney! What a blattering on the windows, and what a cannonading on the battlements! What can the night be about? and what has put old Nox into such a most outrageous passion? He has driven our Winter Rhapsody clean out of our noddle—and to-morrow we must be sending for the slater, the plumber, and the glazier. To go to bed in such a hurly-burly, would be to make an Ultra-Toryish acknowledgment, not only of the divine right, but of the divine power of King Morpheus. But an Ultra-Tory we are not—though Ultra-Trimmers try to impose upon themselves that fiction among a thousand others; so we shall smoke a cigar, and let sleep go to the dogs, the deuce, the devil, and the Chartists.

STROLL TO GRASSMERE.

FIRST SAUNTER.

Companion of the Crutch! hast thou been a loving observer of the weather of our island-clime? We do not mean to ask if you have from youth been in the daily practice of rising from your study-chair at regular intervals, and ascertaining the precise point of Mercury's elevation on the barometrical scale. The idea of trusting, throughout all the fluctuations of the changeful and capricious atmosphere in which we live, to quicksilver, is indeed preposterous; and we have long noticed that meteorologists make an early figure in our obituaries. Seeing the head of the god above the mark "fair," or "settled," out they march in thins, without great-coat or umbrella, when such a thunder-plump falls down in a deluge, that, returning home by water and steam, they take to bed, and on the ninth day fever hurries them off, victims to their confidence in that treacherous tube. But we mean to ask have you an eye, an ear, and a sixth sense, anonymous and instinctive, for all the prognosticating sights and sounds, and motions and shapes, of nature? Have you studied, in silence and solitude, the low, strange, and spirit-like whisperings, that often, when bird and bee are mute, come and go, here and there, now from crag, now from coppice, and now from moor, all over the sultry stillness of the clouded landscape? Have you listened among mountains to the voice of streams, till you heard them prophesying change? Have you so mastered the occult science of mists, as that you can foretell each proud or fair Emergency, and the hour when grove, precipice, or plain, shall in sudden revelation be clothed with the pomp of sunshine? Are all Bewick's birds, and beasts, and fishes visible to your eyes in the woods, wastes, and waves of the clouds? And know ye what aerial condor, dragon, and whale, respectively portend? Are the

Fata Morgana as familiar to you as the Aberdeen Almanac? When a mile-square hover of crows darkens air and earth, or settling loads every tree with sable fruitage, are you your own augur, equally as when one raven lifts up his hoary blackness from a stone, and sails sullenly off with a croak, that gets fiercer and more savage in the lofty distance? Does the leaf of the forest twinkle futurity? the lonely lichen brighten or pale its lustre with change? Does not the gift of prophecy dwell with the family of the violets and the lilies? The prescient harebells, do they not let drop their closing blossoms when the heavens are niggard of their dews, or uphold them like cups thirsty for wine, when the blessing, yet unfelt by duller animal life, is beginning to drop balmily down from the rainy cloud embosomed in the blue of a midsummer's meridian day?

Forgive these friendly interrogatories. Perhaps you are weather-wiser than ourselves; yet for not a few years we bore the name of "The Man of the Mountains;" and, though no great linguists, we hope that we know somewhat more than the vocabulary of the languages of calm and storm. Remember that we are now at Ambleside—and one week's residence there may let you into some of the secrets of the unsteady Cabinet of St Cloud.

One advice we give you, and by following it you cannot fail to be happy at Ambleside, and everywhere else. Whatever the weather be, love, admire, and delight in it, and vow that you would not change it for the atmosphere of a dream. If it be close, hot, oppressive, be thankful for the faint air that comes down fitfully from cliff and chasm, or the breeze that ever and anon gushes from stream and lake. If the heavens are filled with sunshine, and you feel the vanity of parasols, how cool the sylvan shade for ever moistened by the murmurs of that fairy waterfall! Should it blow great guns, cannot you take shelter in yonder magnificent fort, whose hanging battlements are warded even from the thunder-bolt by the dense umbrage of unviolated woods? Rain—rain—rain—an even-down pour of rain, that forces upon you visions of Noah and his ark, and the top of Mount Ararat—still, we beseech you, be happy. It cannot last long at that rate; the thing is impossible. Even this very afternoon will the rainbow span the blue entrance into Rydal's woody vale, as if to

hail the westering sun on his approach to the mountains—and a hundred hill-born torrents will be seen flashing out of the upfolding mists. What a delightful dazzle on the light-stricken river! Each meadow shames the lustre of the emerald; and the soul wishes not for language to speak the pomp and prodigality of colours that Heaven now rejoices to lavish on the grove-girdled Fairfield, who has just tossed off the clouds from his rocky crest.

You will not imagine, from anything we have ever said, that we are enemies to early rising. Now and then, what purer bliss than to embrace the new-wakened Morn, just as she is rising from her dewy bed! At such hour, we feel as if there were neither physical nor moral evil in the world. The united power of peace, innocence, and beauty subdues everything to itself, and life is love.

Forgive us, loveliest of Mornings! for having overslept the assignation hour, and allowed thee to remain all by thyself in the solitude, wondering why thy worshipper could prefer to thy presence the fairest phantoms that ever visited a dream. And thou hast forgiven us—for not clouds of displeasure these that have settled on thy forehead: the unreproaching light of thy countenance is upon us—a loving murmur steals into our heart from thine—and pure as a child's, daughter of Heaven! is thy breath.

In the spirit of that invocation we look around us, and as the idea of morning dies, sufficient for our happiness is "the light of common day"—the imagery of common earth. There has been rain during the night—enough, and no more, to enliven nature—the mists are ascending composedly with promise of gentle weather—and the sun, so mild that we can look him in the face with unwinking eyes, gives assurance that as he has risen so will he reign, and so will he set in peace.

Yet we cannot help thinking it somewhat remarkable, that, to the best of our memory, never once were we the very first out into the dawn. We say nothing of birds—for they, with their sweet jargoning, anticipate it, and from their bed on the bough feel the forerunning warmth of the sunrise; neither do we allude to hares, for they are "hirpling hame," to sleep away the light hours, open-eyed, in the briery quarry in the centre of the trackless wood. Even cows and horses we can excuse being up before us, for they have bivouacked; and the

latter, as they often sleep standing, are naturally somnambulists. Weasels, too, we can pardon for running across the road before us, and as they reach the hole-in-the-wall, showing by their clear eyes that they have been awake for hours, and have probably breakfasted on leveret. We have no spite at chanticleer, nor the hooting owls against whom he is so lustily crowing hours before the orient; nor do we care although we know that is not the first sudden plunge of the tyrant trout into the insect cloud already hovering over the tarn. But we confess that it is a little mortifying to our pride of time and place, to meet an old beggar-woman, who from the dust on her tattered brogues has evidently marched miles from her last night's wayside howf, and who holds out her withered palm for charity, at an hour when a cripple of fourscore might have been supposed sleeping on her pallet of straw. A pedlar, too, who has got through a portion of the Excursion before the sun has illumed the mountain-tops, is mortifying, with his piled pack and ellwand. There, as we are a Christian, is Ned Hurd, landing a pike on the margin of the Reed-pool, on his way from Hayswater, where he has been all night angling, till his creel is as heavy as a sermon; and a little further on, comes issuing like a Dryad's daughter, from the gate in the lane, sweet little Alice Elleray, with a basket dangling beneath her arm, going in her orphan beauty to gather, in their season, wild strawberries or violets in the woods.

Sweet orphan of Wood-edge! what would many a childless pair give for a creature one-half so beautiful as thou, to break the stillness of a home that wants but one blessing to make it perfectly happy! Yet there are few or none to lay a hand on that golden head, or leave a kiss upon its ringlets. The father of Alice Elleray was a wild and reckless youth, and, going to the wars, died in a foreign land. Her mother soon faded away of a broken heart;—and who was to care for the orphan child of the forgotten friendless? An old pauper who lives in that hut, scarcely distinguishable from the shielings of the charcoal-burners, was glad to take her from the parish for a weekly mite that helps to eke out her own subsistence. For two or three years the child was felt a burden by the solitary widow; but ere she had reached her fifth summer, Alice Elleray never left the hut without darkness seeming to overshadow it—never entered the door without bringing the

sunshine. Where can the small, lonely creature have heard so many tunes, and airs, and snatches of old songs—as if some fairy bird had taught her melodies of fairyland? She is now in her tenth year, nor an idler in her solitude. Do you wish for a flowery bracelet for the neck of a chosen one, whose perfumes may mingle with the bosom-balm of her virgin beauty? The orphan of Wood-edge will wreath it of blossoms cropt before the sun hath melted the dew on leaf or petal. Will you be for carrying away with you to the far-off city some pretty little sylvan toy, to remind you of Ambleside and Rydal, and other beautiful names of beautiful localities near the lucid waters of Windermere? Then, Lady! purchase, at little cost, from the fair basket-maker, an ornament for your parlour, that will not disgrace its fanciful furniture, and, as you sit at your dreamy needlework, will recall the green forest glades of Brathy or Calgarth. Industrious creature! each day is to thee, in thy simplicity, an entire life. All thoughts, all feelings, arise and die in peace between sunrise and sunset. What carest thou for being an orphan! knowing, as thou well dost, that God is thy father and thy mother, and that a prayer to Him brings health, food, and sleep to the innocent.

Letting drop a curtsy, taught by Nature, the mother of the Graces, Alice Elleray, the orphan of Wood-edge, without waiting to be twice bidden, trills, as if from a silver pipe, a wild, bird-like warble, that in its cheerfulness has now and then a melancholy fall, and, at the close of the song, hers are the only eyes that are not dimmed with the haze of tears. Then away she glides with a thankful smile, and dancing over the greensward, like an uncertain sunbeam, lays the treasure, won by her beauty, her skill, and her industry, on the lap of her old guardian, who blesses her with the uplifting of withered hands.

Meanwhile, we request you to walk away with us up to Stockgill-force. There has been a new series of dry weather, to be sure; but to our liking, a waterfall is best in a rainless summer. After a flood, the noise is beyond all endurance. You get stunned and stupified till your head splits. Then you may open your mouth like a barn-door—we are speaking to you, sir—and roar into a friend's ear all in vain a remark on the cataract. To him you are a dumb man. In two minutes you are as completely drenched in spray as if you had fallen

out of a boat—and descend to dinner with a toothache that keeps you in starvation in the presence of provender sufficient for a whole bench of bishops. In dry weather, on the contrary, the waterfall is in moderation; and instead of tumbling over the cliff in a perpetual peal of thunder, why, it slides and slidders merrily and musically away down the green shelving rocks, and sinks into repose in many a dim or lucid pool, amidst whose foam-bells is playing or asleep the fearless Naiad. Deuce a headache have you—speak in a whisper, and not a syllable of your excellent observation is lost; your coat is dry, except that a few dewdrops have been shook over you from the branches stirred by the sudden wing-clap of the cushat—and as for toothache interfering with dinner, you eat as if your tusks had been just sharpened, and would not scruple to discuss nuts, upper-and-lower-jaw-work fashion, against the best crackers in the county. And all this comes of looking at Stockgill-force, or any other waterfall, in dry weather, after a few refreshing and fertilising showers that make the tributary rills to murmur, and set at work a thousand additional feeders to every Lake.

Ha! Matutine Roses!—budding, half-blown, consummate—you are, indeed, in irresistible blush! We shall not say which of you we love best—*she knows it;* but we see there is no hope to-day for the old man—for you are all paired—and he must trudge it *solus*, in capacity of Guide-General of the Forces. What! the nymphs are going to pony it? And you intend, you selfish fellows, that we shall hold all the reins whenever the spirit moveth you to deviate from bridle-path, to clamber cliff for a bird's-eye view, or dive into dells for some rare plant? Well, well—there is a tradition, that once we were young ourselves; and so redolent of youth are these hills, that we are more than half inclined to believe it—so blush and titter, and laugh and look down, ye innocent wicked ones, each with her squire by her palfrey's mane, while good old Christopher, like a true guide, keeps hobbling in the rear on his Crutch. Holla there!—to the right of our friend Mr Benson's smithy—and to Rothay-bridge. Turn in at a gate to the right hand, which, twenty to one, you will find open, that the cattle may take an occasional promenade along the turnpike, and cool their palates with a little ditch grass, and saunter along by Millar-bridge and Foxgill on to Pelter-bridge,

and, if you please, to Rydal-mere. Thus, and thus only, is seen the vale of Ambleside; and what a vale of grove, and glade, and stream, and cliff, and cottage, and villa, and grass-field, and garden, and orchard, and—But not another word, for you would forthwith compare our description with the reality, and seeing it faint and feeble, would toss it into the Rothay, and laugh as the Vol. plumped over a waterfall!

The sylvan—or say rather the forest scenery—(for there is to us an indescribable difference between these two words)—of Rydal-park, was, in memory of living men, magnificent, and it still contains a treasure of old trees. Lady Diana's white pea-fowl, sitting on the limbs of that huge old tree like creatures newly alighted from the Isles of Paradise! all undisturbed by the waterfalls, which, as you keep gazing on the long-depending plumage illumining the forest gloom, seem indeed to lose their sound, and to partake the peace of that resplendent show—each splendour a wondrous Bird! For they stretch themselves all up, with their graceful crests, o'ercanopied by the umbrage draperied as from a throne. And never surely were seen in this daylight world such unterrestrial creatures—though come from afar, all happy as at home in the Fairies' Oak.

By all means ride away into these woods, and lose yourself for half an hour among the cooing of cushats, and the shrill shriek of startled blackbirds, and the rustle of the harmless slow-worm among the last year's red beech-leaves. No very great harm in a kiss under the shadow of an oak (oh fie!) while the magpie chatters angrily at safe distance, and the more innocent squirrel peeps down upon you from a bough of the canopy, and, hoisting his tail, glides into the obscurity of the loftiest umbrage. You still continue to see and hear; but the sight is a glimmer, and the sound a hum, as if the forest-glade were swarming with bees, from the ground-flowers to the herons' nests. Refreshed by your dream of Dryads, follow a lonesome din that issues from a pile of wooded cliffs, and you are led to a Waterfall. Five minutes are enough for taking an impression, if your mind be of the right material, and you carry it away with you further down the Forest. Such a torrent will not reach the lake without disporting itself into many little cataracts; and saw ye ever such a fairy one as that flowing through below an ivied bridge into a cir-

cular basin overshadowed by the uncertain twilight of many checkering branches, and washing the rock-base of a Hermitage, in which a sin-sickened or pleasure-palled man might, before his hairs were grey, forget all the gratifications and all the guilt of the noisy world?

You are now all standing together in a group beside Ivy-cottage, the river gliding below its wooden bridge from Rydalmere. It is a perfect model of such architecture—breathing the very spirit of Westmoreland. The public road, skirted by its front paling, does not in the least degree injure its character of privacy and retirement; so we think at this dewy hour of prime, when the gossamer meets our faces, extended from the honey-suckled slate-porch to the trees on the other side of the turnpike. And see how the multitude of low-hanging roofs and gable-ends, and dovecot-looking windows, steal away up a green and shrubberied acclivity, and terminating in wooded rocks that seem part of the building, in the uniting richness of ivy, lichens, moss-roses, broom, and sweet-brier, murmuring with birds and bees, busy near hive and nest! It would be extremely pleasant to breakfast in that deep-windowed room on the ground-floor, on cream and barley cakes, eggs, coffee, and dry-toast, with a little mutton-ham not too severely salted, and at the conclusion, a nut-shell of Glenlivet or Cognac. But, Lord preserve ye! it is not yet six o'clock in the morning; and what Christian kettle simmereth before seven? Yes, my sweet Harriet, that sketch does you credit, and it is far from being very unlike the original. Rather too many chimneys by about half-a-dozen; and where did you find that steeple immediately over the window marked "Dairy?" The pigs are somewhat too sumptuously lodged in that elegant sty, and the hen-roost might accommodate a phœnix. But the features of the chief porch are very happily hit off—you have caught the very attic spirit of the roof—and some of the windows may be justly said to be staring likenesses.—Ivy-cottage is slipped into our portfolio, and we shall compare it, on our return to Scotland, with Buchanan Lodge.

Gallantry forbids, but Truth demands to say, that young ladies are but indifferent sketchers. The dear creatures have no notion of perspective. At flower-painting and embroidery, they are pretty fair hands, but they make sad work among waterfalls and ruins. Notwithstanding, it is pleasant to hang

over them, seated on stone or stool, drawing from nature ; and now and then to help them in with a horse or a hermit. It is a difficult, almost an impossible thing—that foreshortening. The most speculative genius is often at a loss to conjecture the species of a human being foreshortened by a young lady. The hanging Tower at Pisa is, we believe, some thirty feet or so off the perpendicular, and there is one at Caerphilly about seventeen ; but these are nothing to the castles in the air we have seen built by the touch of a female magician ; nor is it an unusual thing with artists of the fair sex to order their plumed chivalry to gallop down precipices considerably steeper than a house, on animals apparently produced between the tiger and the bonassus. When they have succeeded in getting something like the appearance of water between what may be conjectured banks, they are not very particular about its running occasionally up-hill ; and it is interesting to see a stream stealing quietly below trees in gradual ascension, till, disappearing for a few minutes over one summit, it comes thundering down another, in the shape of a waterfall, on the head of an elderly gentleman, unsuspectingly reading Mr Wordsworth's "Excursion," perhaps, in the foreground. Nevertheless, we repeat, that it is delightful to hang over one of the dear creatures, seated on stone or stool, drawing from nature ; for whatever may be the pencil's skill, the eye may behold the glimpse of a vision whose beauty shall be remembered when even Windermere herself has for a while faded into oblivion.

On such excursions there are sure to occur a few enviable adventures. First, the girths get wrong, and, without allowing your beloved virgin to alight, you spend more time than is absolutely necessary in arranging them ; nor can you help admiring the attitude into which the graceful creature is forced to draw up her delicate limbs, that her fairy feet may not be in the way to impede your services. By-and-by a calf—which you hope will be allowed to grow up into a cow—stretching up her curved red back from behind a wall, startles John Darby, albeit unused to the starting mood, and you leap four yards to the timely assistance of the fair shrieker, tenderly pressing her bridle-hand as you find the rein that has not been lost, and wonder what has become of the whip that never existed. A little further on, a bridgeless stream crosses the road—a dangerous-looking ford indeed—a foot deep at

the very least, and scorning wet feet, as they ought to be scorned, you almost carry, serene in danger, your affianced bride (or she is in a fair way of becoming so) in your arms off the saddle, nor relinquish the delightful clasp till all risk is at an end, some hundred yards on, along the velvet herbage. Next stream you come to has indeed a bridge—but then what a bridge! A long, coggly, cracked slate-stone, whose unsteady clatter would make the soberest steed jump over the moon. You beseech the timid girl to sit fast, and she almost leans down to your breast as you press to meet the blessed burden, and to prevent the steady old stager from leaping over the battlements. But now the chasm on each side of the narrow path is so tremendous, that she must dismount, after due disentanglement, from that awkward, old-fashioned crutch and pummel, and from a stirrup, into which a little foot, when it has once crept like a mouse, finds itself caught as in a trap of singular construction, and difficult to open for releasement. You feel that all you love in the world is indeed fully, freshly, and warmly in your arms, nor can you bear to set the treasure down on the rough stony road, but look round, and round, and round, for a soft spot, which you finally prophesy at some distance up the hill, whitherwards, in spite of pouting Yea and Nay, you persist in carrying her whose head is ere long to lie in your tranquil bosom.

Ivy-cottage, you see, is the domicile of gentlemen and lady folk; but look through yonder dispersion, and in a minute or two your eyes will see distinctly, in spite of the trees, a *bonâ fide* farmhouse, inhabited by a family whose head is at once an agriculturist, a shepherd, and a woodsman. A Westmoreland cottage has scarcely any resemblance to a Scottish one. A Scottish cottage (in the Lowlands) has rarely any picturesque beauty in itself—a narrow oblong, with steep thatched roof, and an ear-like chimney at each of the two gable-ends. Many of the Westmoreland cottages would seem, to an ignorant observer, to have been originally built on a model conceived by the finest poetical genius. In the first place, they are almost always built precisely where they ought to be, had the builder's prime object been to beautify the dale; at least, so we have often felt in moods, when perhaps our emotions were unconsciously soothed into complacency by the spirit of the scene. Where the sedgy brink of the lake or tarn circles

into a lone bay, with a low hill of coppice-wood on one side, and a few tall pines on the other, no—it is a grove of sycamores—there, about a hundred yards from the water, and about ten above its ordinary level, peeps out from its cheerful seclusion that prettiest of all hamlets—Braithwaite-fold. The hill behind is scarcely sylvan—yet it has many hazels—a few bushes—here and there a holly—and why or wherefore, who can now tell, a grove of enormous yews. There is sweet pasturage among the rocks, and as you may suppose it a spring-day, mild without much sunshine, there is a bleating of lambs, a twitter of small birds, and the deep coo of the stock-dove. A wreath of smoke is always a feature of such a scene in description; but here there is now none, for probably the whole household are at work in the open air, and the fire, since fuel is not to be wasted, has been wisely suffered to expire on the hearth. No. There is a volume of smoke, as if the chimney were in flame—a tumultuous cloud pours aloft, straggling and broken, through the broad slate stones that defend the mouth of the vomitory from every blast. The matron within is doubtless about to prepare breakfast, and last year's rotten pea-sticks have soon heated the capacious gridiron. Let the smoke-wreath melt away at its leisure, and do you admire, along with us, the infinite variety of all those little shelving and sloping roofs. To feel the full force of the peculiar beauty of these antique tenements, you must understand their domestic economy. If ignorant of that, you can have no conception of the meaning of any one thing you see—roofs, eaves, chimneys, beams, props, doors, hovels, and sheds, and hanging staircase, being all huddled together, as you think, in unintelligible confusion; whereas they are all precisely what and where they ought to be, and have had their colours painted, forms shaped, and places allotted by wind and weather, and the perpetually but pleasantly felt necessities of the natural condition of mountaineers.

Dear, dear is the thatch to the eyes of a son of Caledonia, for he may remember the house in which he was born; but what thatch was ever so beautiful as that slate from the quarry of the White-moss? Each one—no—not each one—but almost each one—of these little overhanging roofs seems to have been slated, or repaired at least, in its own separate season, so various is the lustre of lichens that bathes the

whole, as richly as ever rock was bathed fronting the sun on the mountain's brow. Here and there is seen some small window, before unobserved, curtained perhaps—for the statesman, and the statesman's wife, and the statesman's daughters, have a taste—a taste inspired by domestic happiness, which, seeking simply comfort, unconsciously creates beauty, and whatever its homely hand touches, that it adorns. There would seem to be many fireplaces in Braithwaite-fold, from such a number of chimney-pillars, each rising up to a different altitude from a different base, round as the bole of a tree—and elegant, as if shaped by Vitruvius. To us, we confess, there is nothing offensive in the most glaring white roughcast that ever changed a cottage into a patch of sunny snow. Yet here that greyish-tempered unobtrusive hue does certainly blend to perfection with roof, rock, and sky. Every instrument is in tune. Not even in sylvan glade, nor among the mountain rocks, did wanderer's eyes ever behold a porch of meeting tree-stems, or reclining cliffs, more gracefully festooned than the porch from which now issues one of the fairest of Westmeria's daughters. With one arm crossed before her eyes in a sudden burst of sunshine, with the other Ellinor Inman waves to her little brother and sisters among the bark-peelers in the Rydal woods. The graceful signal is repeated till seen, and in a few minutes a boat steals twinkling from the opposite side of the lake, each tug of the youthful rowers distinctly heard through the hollow of the vale. A singing voice rises and ceases—as if the singer were watching the echo—and is not now the picture complete?

After a time old buildings undergo no perceptible change, any more than old trees; and after they have begun to feel the touch of decay, it is long before they look melancholy; for while they continue to be used, they cannot help looking cheerful, and even dilapidation is painful only when felt to be lifeless. The house now in ruins, that we passed a few hundred yards ago without your seeing it—we saw it with a sigh—among some dark firs, just before we began to ascend the hill, was many years ago inhabited by Miles Mackareth, a man of some substance, and universally esteemed for his honest and pious character. His integrity, however, wanted the grace of courteousness, and his religion was somewhat gloomy and austere, while all the habits of his life were sad,

secluded, and solitary. His fireside was always decent, but never cheerful—there the passing traveller partook of an ungrudging, but a grave hospitality; and although neighbours dropping in unasked were always treated as neighbours, yet seldom were they invited to pass an evening below his roof, except upon the stated festivals of the seasons, or some domestic event demanding sociality, according to the country custom. Year after year the gloom deepened on his strong-marked intellectual countenance; and his hair, once black as jet, became untimely grey. Indeed, although little more than fifty years old, when you saw his head uncovered, you would have taken him for a man approaching to threescore and ten. His wife and only daughter, both naturally of a cheerful disposition, grew every year more retired, till at last they shunned society altogether, and were seldom seen but at church. And now a vague rumour ran through the hamlets of the neighbouring valleys, that he was scarcely in his right mind—that he had been heard by shepherds on the hills talking to himself wild words, and pacing up and down in a state of distraction. The family ceased to attend divine worship, and as for some time the Sabbath had been the only day they were visible, few or none now knew how they fared, and by many they were nearly forgotten. Meanwhile, during the whole summer, the miserable man haunted the loneliest places; and, to the terror of his wife and daughter, who had lost all power over him, and durst not speak, frequently passed whole days they knew not where, and came home, silent, haggard, and ghastly, about midnight. His widow afterwards told that he seldom slept, and never without dreadful dreams—that often he would sit up all night in his bed, with his eyes fixed and staring on nothing, and uttering ejaculations for mercy for all his sins.

What these sins were he never confessed—nor, as far as man may judge of man, had he ever committed any act that needed to lie heavy on his conscience. But his whole being, he said, was one black sin—and a spirit had been sent to tell him, that his doom was to be with the wicked through all the ages of eternity. That spirit, without form or shadow—only a voice—seldom left his side day or night, go where he would; but its most dreadful haunt was under a steep rock called Blakerigg-scaur; and thither, in whatever direction he

turned his face on leaving his own door, he was led by an irresistible impulse, even as a child is led by the hand. Tenderly and truly had he once loved his wife and daughter, nor less because that love had been of few words, and with a shade of sorrow. But now he looked on them almost as if they had been strangers—except at times, when he started up, kissed them, and wept. His whole soul was possessed by horrid fantasies, of which it was itself object and victim; and it is probable that had he seen them both lying dead, he would have left their corpses in the house, and taken his way to the mountains. At last one night passed away and he came not. His wife and daughter, who had not gone to bed, went to the nearest house and told their tale. In an hour a hundred feet were traversing all the loneliest places—till a hat was seen floating on Loughrigg-tarn, and then all knew that the search was near an end. Drags were soon got from the fishermen on Windermere, and a boat crossed and recrossed the tarn on its miserable quest, till in an hour, during which wife and daughter sat without speaking on a stone by the water-edge, the body came floating to the surface, with its long silver hair. One single shriek only, it is said, was heard, and from that shriek till three years afterwards, his widow knew not that her husband was with the dead. On the brink of that small sandy bay the body was laid down and cleansed of the muddy weeds—his daughter's own hands assisting in the rueful work—and she walked among the mourners, the day before the Sabbath, when the funeral entered the little burial-ground of Langdale chapel, and the congregation sung a Christian psalm over the grave of the forgiven suicide.

We cannot patronise the practice of walking in large parties of ten or a score, ram-stam and helter-skelter, on to the front-green or gravel-walk of any private nobleman's or gentleman's house, to enjoy, from a commanding station, an extensive or picturesque view of the circumjacent country. It is too much in the style of the Free and Easy. The family within, sitting perhaps at dinner with the windows open, or sewing and reading in a cool dishabille, cannot like to be stared in upon by so many curious and inquisitive pupils all a-hunt for prospects; nor were these rose-bushes planted there for public use, nor that cherry-tree in vain netted against the black-

birds. Not but that a party may now and then excusably enough pretend to lose their way in a strange country; and looking around them in well-assumed bewilderment, bow hesitatingly and respectfully to maid or matron at door or window, and, with a thousand apologies, lingeringly offer to retire by the avenue gate, on the other side of the spacious lawn, that terrace-like hangs over vale, lake, and river. But to avoid all possible imputation of impertinence, follow you our example, and make all such incursions by break of day. We hold that, for a couple of hours before and after sunrise, all the earth is common property. Nobody surely would think for a moment of looking black on any number of freebooting lakers coming full sail up the avenue, right against the front, at four o'clock in the morning? At that hour, even the poet would grant them the privilege of the arbour where he sits when inspired, and writing for immortality. He feels conscious that he ought to have been in bed; and hastens, on such occasions, to apologise for his intrusion on strangers availing themselves of the rights and privileges of the Dawn.

Leaving Ivy-cottage, then, and its yet unbreathing chimneys, turn in at the first gate to your right (if it be not built up, in which case leap the wall), and find your way the best you can through among old pollarded and ivied ash-trees, intermingled with yews, and over knolly ground, brier-woven, and here and there whitened with the jagged thorn, till you reach, through a slate-stile, a wide gravel walk, shaded by pine-trees, and open on the one side to an orchard. Proceed—and little more than a hundred steps will land you on the front of Rydal-mount, the house of the great Poet of the Lakes. Mr Wordsworth is not at home, but away to cloudland in his little boat so like the crescent moon. But do not by too much eloquence awaken the family, or scare the silence, or frighten "the innocent brightness of the new-born day." We hate all sentimentalism; but we bid you, in his own words,

"With gentle hand
Touch, for there is a spirit in the leaves."

From a quaint platform of evergreens you see a blue gleam of Windermere over the grove-tops—close at hand are Rydal-hall and its ancient woods—right opposite the Loughrigg-fells, ferny, rocky, and sylvan, but the chief breadth of breast

pastoral—and to the right Rydal-mere, seen, and scarcely seen, through embowering trees, and mountain-masses bathed in the morning light, and the white-wreathed mists for a little while longer shrouding their summits. A lately erected private chapel lifts its little tower from below, surrounded by a green, on which there are yet no graves—nor do we know if it be intended for a place of burial. A few houses are sleeping beyond the chapel by the river-side; and the people beginning to set them in order, here and there a pillar of smoke ascends into the air, giving cheerfulness and animation to the scene.

The Lake-Poets! ay, their day is come. The lakes are worthy of the poets, and the poets of the lakes. That poets should love and live among lakes, once seemed most absurd to critics whose domiciles were on the Nor-Loch, in which there was not sufficient water for a tolerable quagmire. Edinburgh Castle is a noble rock—so are the Salisbury Craigs noble craigs—and Arthur's seat a noble lion couchant, who, were he to leap down on Auld Reekie, would break her backbone and bury her in the Cowgate. But place them by Pavey-ark, or Red-scaur, or the glamour of Glaramara, and they would look about as magnificent as an upset pack of cards. Who, pray, are the Nor-Loch poets? Not the Minstrel—he holds by the tenure of the Tweed. Not Campbell—"he heard in dreams the music of the Clyde." Not Joanna Baillie—her inspiration was nursed on the Calder's sylvan banks and the moors of Strathaven. Stream-loving Coila nurtured Burns; and the Shepherd's grave is close to the cot in which he was born—within hearing of the Ettrick's mournful voice on its way to meet the Yarrow. Skiddaw overshadows, and Greta freshens the bower of him who framed,

"Of Thalaba, the wild and wondrous song."

Here the woods, mountains, and waters of Rydal imparadise the abode of the wisest of nature's bards, with whom poetry is religion. And where was he ever so happy as in that region, he who created "Christabelle," "beautiful exceedingly;" and sent the "Auncient Mariner" on the wildest of all voyagings, and brought him back with the ghastliest of all crews, and the strangest of all curses that ever haunted crime?

Of all Poets that ever lived Wordsworth has been at once the most truthful and the most idealising; external nature from him has received a soul, and becomes our teacher; while he has so filled our minds with images from her, that every mood finds some fine affinities there, and thus we all hang for sustenance and delight on the bosom of our mighty Mother. We believe that there are many who have an eye for Nature, and even a sense of the beautiful, without any very profound feeling; and to them Wordsworth's finest descriptive passages seem often languid or diffuse, and not to present to their eyes any distinct picture. Perhaps sometimes this objection may be just; but to paint to the eye is easier than to the imagination—and Wordsworth, taking it for granted that people can now see and hear, desires to make them feel and understand; of his pupil it must not be said,

> "A primrose by the river's brim
> A yellow primrose is to him,
> And it is nothing more;"

the poet gives the something more till we start at the disclosure as at a lovely apparition—yet an apparition of beauty not foreign to the flower, but exhaling from its petals, which till that moment seemed to us but an ordinary bunch of leaves. In these lines is a humbler example of how recondite may be the spirit of beauty in any most familiar thing belonging to the kingdom of nature; one higher far—but of the same kind—is couched in two immortal verses—

> "To me the humblest flower that blows, can give
> Thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears."

In what would the poet differ from the worthy man of prose, if his imagination possessed not a beautifying and transmuting power over the objects of the inanimate world? Nay, even the naked truth itself is seen clearly but by poetic eyes; and were a sumph all at once to become a poet, he would all at once be stark-staring mad. Yonder ass licking his lips at a thistle, sees but water for him to drink in Windermere a-glow with the golden lights of setting suns. The ostler or the boots at Lowood-inn takes a somewhat higher flight, and for a moment, pausing with curry-comb or blacking-brush in his suspended hand, calls on Sally Chambermaid

for gracious sake to look at Pull-wyke. The waiter, who has cultivated his taste from conversation with Lakers, learns their phraseology, and declares the sunset to be exceedingly handsome. The Laker, who sometimes has a soul, feels it rise within him as the rim of the orb disappears in the glow of softened fire. The artist compliments Nature, by likening her evening glories to a picture of Claud Lorraine—while the poet feels the sense sublime

> "Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Compare any one page, or any twenty pages, with the character given of Wordsworth's poetry in the obsolete criticism that sought to send it to oblivion. The poet now sits on his throne in the blue serene—and no voice from below dares deny his supremacy in his own calm dominions. And was it of him, whom devout imagination, dreaming of ages to come, now sees, placed in his immortality between Milton and Spenser, that the whole land once rang with ridicule, while her wise men wiped their eyes "of tears that sacred *pity* had engendered," and then relieved their hearts by joining in the laughter "of the universal British nation?" All the ineffable absurdities of the bard are now embodied in Seven Volumes—the sense of the ridiculous still survives among us—our men of wit and power are not all dead—we have yet our satirists, great and small—editors in thousands, and contributors in tens of thousands—yet not a whisper is heard to breathe detraction from the genius of the high-priest of nature; while the voice of the awakened and enlightened land declares it to be divine—using towards him not the language merely of admiration but of reverence—of love and gratitude due to the benefactor of humanity, who has purified its passions by loftiest thoughts and noblest sentiments, stilling their turbulence by the same processes that magnify their power, and showing how the soul, in ebb and flow, and when its tide is at full, may be at once as strong and as serene as the sea.

There are few pictures painted by him merely for the pleasure of the eye, or even the imagination, though all the pictures he ever painted are beautiful to both; they have all a moral meaning—many a meaning more than moral—and his poetry can be comprehended, in its full scope and spirit, but by those who feel the sublimity of these four lines in his "Ode to Duty,"—

> "Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
> And fragrance in thy footing treads;
> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
> And the most ancient heavens through thee are fresh and strong."

Is thy life disturbed by guilty or sinful passions? Have they gained a mastery of thee—and art thou indeed their slave? Then the poetry of Wordsworth must be to thee

> "As is a picture to a blind man's eye;"

or if thine eyes yet see the light in which it is enveloped, and thy heart yet feels the beauty it reveals, in spite of the clouds that overhang and the storms that trouble them, that beauty will be unbearable, till regret become remorse, and remorse penitence, and penitence restore thee to those intuitions of the truth that illumine his sacred pages, and thou knowest and feelest once more that

> "The primal duties shine aloft—like stars,"

that life's best pleasures grow like flowers all around and beneath thy feet.

Nor are we not privileged to cherish a better feeling than pride in the belief, or rather knowledge, that We have helped to diffuse Wordsworth's poetry not only over this Island, but the furthest dependencies of the British empire, and throughout the United States of America. Many thousands have owed to us their emancipation from the prejudices against it, under which they had wilfully remained ignorant of it during many years; and we have instructed as many more, whose hearts were free, how to look on it with those eyes of love which alone can discover the Beautiful. Communications have been made to us from across the Atlantic, and from the heart of India—from the Occident and the Orient—thanking us for

having vindicated and extended the fame of the best of our living bards, till the name of Wordsworth has become a household word on the banks of the Mississippi and the Ganges. It would have been so had we never lived, *but not so soon;* and many a noble nature has worshipped his genius, as displayed in our pages, not in fragments but in perfect poems, accompanied with our comments, who had no means in those distant regions of possessing his volumes, whereas Maga flies on wings to the uttermost parts of the earth.

As for our own dear Scotland—for whose sake, with all her faults, the light of day is sweet to our eyes—twenty years ago there were not twenty copies—we question if there were ten—of the "Lyrical Ballads" in all the land of the mountain and the flood. Now Wordsworth is studied all Scotland over—and Scotland is proud and happy to know, from his Memorials of the Tours he has made through her brown heaths and shaggy woods, that the Bard's heart overflows with kindness towards her children—that his songs have celebrated the simple and heroic character of her olden times, nor left unhonoured the virtues that yet survive in her national character. All her generous youth regard him now as a great Poet; and we have been more affected than we should choose to confess, by the grateful acknowledgment of many a gifted spirit, that to us it was owing that they had opened their eyes and their hearts to the ineffable beauty of that poetry in which they had, under our instructions, found not a vain visionary delight, but a strength and succour and consolation, breathed as from a shrine in the silence and solitude of nature, in which stood their father's hut, sanctifying their humble birthplace with pious thoughts that made the very weekdays to them like Sabbaths—nor on the evening of the Sabbath might they not blamelessly be blended with those breathed from the Bible, enlarging their souls to religion by those meditative moods which such pure poetry inspires, and by those habits of reflection which its study forms, when pursued under the influence of thoughtful peace.

Why, if it were not for that everlasting—we beg pardon—immortal Wordsworth—the Lakes, and all that belong to them, would be our own—*jure divino*—for we are the heir-apparent to the

"Sole King of rocky Cumberland."

But Wordsworth never will—never can die; and so we are in danger of being cheated out of our due dominion. We cannot think this fatherly treatment of such a son—and yet in our loftiest moods of filial reverence we have heard ourselves exclaiming, while

> "The Cataract of Lodore
> Peal'd to our orisons,"

O King! live for ever!

Therefore, with the fear of "The Excursion" before our eyes, we took to prose—to numerous prose—ay, though we say it that should not say it, to prose as numerous as any verse—and showed such scenes

> "As savage Rosa dash'd, or learned Poussin drew."

Here an English Lake—there a Scottish loch—till Turner grew jealous, and Thomson flung his brush at one of his own unfinished mountains—when lo! a miracle! Creative of grandeur in his very despair, he stood astonished at the cliff that came prerupt from his canvass, and christened itself "the Eagle's Eyrie," as it *frowned serenely* upon the sea, maddening in a foamy circle at its inaccessible feet.

Only in such prose as ours can the heart pour forth its effusions like a strong spring discharging ever so many gallons in a minute, either into pipes that conduct it through some great Metropolitan city, or into a water-course that soon becomes a rivulet, then a stream, then a river, then a lake, and then a sea. Would Fancy luxuriate? Then let her expand wings of prose. In verse, however irregular, her flight is lime-twigged, and she soon takes to hopping on the ground. Would Imagination dive? Let the bell in which she sinks be constructed on the prose principle, and deeper than ever plummet sunk, it will startle monsters at the roots of the coral caves, yet be impervious to the strokes of the most tremendous of tails. Would she soar? In a prose balloon she seeks the stars. There is room and power of ascension for any quantity of ballast—fling it out, and up she goes! Let some gas escape, and she descends far more gingerly than Mrs Graham and his Serene Highness; the grapnel catches a stile, and she steps "like a dreadless angel unpursued" once more upon *terra firma*, and may then celebrate

her aerial voyage, if she choose, in an Ode which will be sure near the end to rise—into prose.

Prose, we believe, is destined to drive what is called Poetry out of the world. Here is a fair challenge. Let any Poet send us a poem of five hundred lines—blanks or not—on any subject; and we shall write on that subject a passage of the same number of words in prose; and the Editors of the Quarterly, Edinburgh, and Westminster, shall decide which deserves the prize. Milton was woefully wrong in speaking of "prose or numerous verse." Prose is a million times more numerous than verse. Then prose improves the more poetical it becomes; but verse, the moment it becomes prosaic, goes to the dogs. Then, the connecting links between two fine passages in verse, it is enjoined, shall be as little like verse as possible; nay, whole passages, critics say, should be of that sort; and why, pray, not prose at once? Why clip the King's English, or the Emperor's German, or the Sublime Porte's Turkish, into bits of dull jingle—pretending to be verses merely because of the proper number of syllables—some of them imprisoned perhaps in parentheses, where they sit helplessly protruding the bare soles of their feet, like folks that have got muzzy, in the stocks?

Wordsworth says well, that the language of common people, when giving utterance to passionate emotions, is highly figurative; and hence he concludes not so well fit for a lyrical ballad. Their volubility is great, nor few their flowers of speech. But who ever heard them, but by the merest accident, spout verses? Rhyme do they never—the utmost they reach is occasional blanks. But their prose! Ye gods! how they do talk! The washerwoman absolutely froths like her own tub; and you never dream of asking her "how she is off for soap?" Paradise Lost! The Excursion! The Task indeed! No man of woman born, no woman by man begotten, ever yet in his or her senses spoke like the authors of those poems. Hamlet, in his sublimest moods, speaks in prose — Lady Macbeth talks prose in her sleep—and so it should be printed. "Out damned spot!" are three words of prose; and who that beheld Siddons wringing her hands to wash them of murder, did not feel that they were the most dreadful ever extorted by remorse from guilt?

A green old age is the most loving season of life, for almost

all the other passions are then dead or dying—or the mind, no more at the mercy of a troubled heart, compares the little pleasure their gratification can ever yield now with what it could at any time long ago, and lets them rest. Envy is the worst disturber or embitterer of man's declining years; but it does not deserve the name of a passion—and is a disease, not of the poor in spirit—for they are blessed—but of the mean, and then they indeed are cursed. For our own parts, we know Envy but as we have studied it in others—and never felt it except towards the wise and good; and then 'twas a longing desire to be like them—painful only when we thought that might never be, and that all our loftiest aspirations might be in vain. Our envy of Genius is of a nature so noble, that it knows no happiness like that of guarding from mildew the laurels on the brows of the Muses' Sons. What a dear kind soul of a critic is old Christopher North! Watering the flowers of poetry, and removing the weeds that might choke them—letting in the sunshine upon them, and fencing them from the blast—proclaiming where the gardens grow, and leading boys and virgins into the pleasant alleys—teaching hearts to love and eyes to see their beauty, and classifying, by the attributes it has pleased nature to bestow on the various orders, the plants of Paradise—This is our occupation—and the happiness of witnessing them all growing in the light of admiration is our reward.

Finding our way back as we choose to Ivy-cottage, we cross the wooden bridge, and away along the western shore of Rydal-mere. Hence you see the mountains in magnificent composition, and craggy coppices with intervening green fields shelving down to the lake margin. It is a small lake, not much more than a mile round, and of a very peculiar character. One memorable cottage only, as far as we remember, peeps on its shore from a grove of sycamores, a statesman's pleasant dwelling; and there are the ruins of another on a slope near the upper end, the circle of the garden still visible. Everything has a quiet but wildish pastoral and sylvan look, and the bleating of sheep fills the hollow of the hills. The lake has a reedy inlet and outlet, and the angler thinks of pike when he looks upon such harbours. There is a single boat-house, where the Lady of the Hall has a padlocked and painted barge for pleasure parties; and the heronry on the

high pine-trees of the only island connects the scene with the ancient park of Rydal, whose oak woods, though thinned and decayed, still preserve the majestic and venerable character of antiquity and baronial state.

Having taken a lingering farewell of Rydal-mere, and of the new Chapel-tower, that seems among the groves already to be an antique, we may either sink down to the stream that flows out of Grassmere and connects the two lakes, crossing a wooden bridge, and then joining the new road that sweeps along to the Village, or we may keep up on the face of the hill, and by a terrace-path reach the Loughrigg-road, a few hundred yards above Tail-end, a pretty cottage-ornée which you will observe crowning a wooded eminence, and looking cheerfully abroad over all the vale. There is one Mount in particular, whence we see to advantage the delightful panorama—encircling mountains—Grassmere Lake far down below your feet, with its one green pastoral isle, sylvan shores, and emerald meadows—huts and houses sprinkled up and down in all directions—the village partly embowered in groves, and partly open below the shadow of large single trees—and the Church-tower, almost always a fine feature in the scenery of the north of England, standing in stately simplicity among the clustering tenements, nor dwindled even by the great height of the hills.

It is pleasant to lose sight entirely of a beautiful scene, and to plod along for a few hundred yards in almost objectless shadow. Our conceptions and feelings are bright and strong from the nearness of their objects, yet the dream is somewhat different from the reality. All at once, at a turning of the road, the splendour reappears like an unfurled banner, and the heart leaps in the joy of the senses. This sort of enjoyment comes upon you before you reach the Village of Grassmere from the point of vision above described, and a stranger sometimes is apt to doubt if it be really the same Lake—that one island, and those few promontories, shifting into such varied combinations with the varying mountain-ridges and ranges, that show top over top in bewildering succession, and give hints of other valleys beyond, and of Tarns rarely visited, among the moorland wastes. A single long dim shadow, falling across the water, alters the whole physiognomy of the scene—nor less a single bright streak of sunshine, brighten-

ing up some feature formerly hidden, and giving animation and expression to the whole face of the Lake.

About a short mile from the Village Inn, you will pass by without seeing it—unless warned not to do so—one of the most singularly beautiful habitations in the world. It belongs to a gentleman of the name of Barber, and, we believe, has been almost entirely built by him—the original hut on which his taste has worked having been a mere shell. The spirit of the place seems to us to be that of Shadowy Silence. Its bounds are small; but it is an indivisible part of a hill-side so secret and sylvan, that it might be the haunt of the roe. You hear the tinkle of a rill, invisible among the hazels—a bird sings or flutters—a bee hums his way through the bewildering wood—but no louder sound. Some fine old forest-trees extend widely their cool and glimmering shade; and a few stumps or armless trunks, whose bulk is increased by a load of ivy that hides the hollow wherein the owls have their domicile, give an air of antiquity to the spot, that, but for other accompaniments, would almost be melancholy. As it is, the scene has a pensive character. As yet you have seen no house, and wonder whither the gravel-walks are to conduct you, winding fancifully and fantastically through the smooth-shaven lawn, bestrewed by a few large leaves of the horse-chestnut or sycamore. But there are clustered verandas where the nightingale might woo the rose, and lattice-windows reaching from eaves to ground-sill, so sheltered that they might stand open in storm and rain, and tall circular chimneys, shaped almost like the stems of the trees that overshadow the roof irregular, and over all a gleam of blue sky and a few motionless clouds. The noisy world ceases to be, and the tranquil heart, delighted with the sweet seclusion, breathes, "Oh! that this were my cell, and that I were a hermit!"

But you soon see that the proprietor is not a hermit; for everywhere you discern unostentatious traces of that elegance and refinement that belong to social and cultivated life; nothing rude and rough-hewn, yet nothing prim and precise. Snails and spiders are taught to keep their own places; and among the flowers of that hanging garden on a sunny slope, not a weed is to be seen, for weeds are beautiful only by the wayside, in the matting of hedge-roots, by the mossy stone, and the brink of the well in the brae—and are offensive only

when they intrude into society above their own rank, and where they have the air and accent of aliens. By pretty pebbled steps of stairs you mount up from platform to platform of the sloping woodland banks—the prospect widening as you ascend, till from a bridge that spans a leaping rivulet, you behold in full blow all Grassmere Vale, Village, Church-tower, and Lake, the whole of the mountains, and a noble arch of sky, the circumference of that little world of peace.

Circumscribed as are the boundaries of this place, yet the grounds are so artfully, while one thinks so artlessly, laid out, that, wandering through their labyrinthine recesses, you might believe yourself in an extensive wilderness. Here you come out upon a green open glade (you see by the sun-dial it is past seven o'clock)—there the arms of an immense tree overshadow what is in itself a scene—yonder you have an alley that serpentises into gloom and obscurity—and from that cliff you doubtless would see over the tree-tops into the outer and airy world. With all its natural beauties is intermingled an agreeable quaintness, that shows the owner has occasionally been working in the spirit of fancy, almost caprice ; the tool-house in the garden is not without its ornaments—the barn seems habitable, and the byre has somewhat the appearance of a chapel. You see at once that the man who lives here, instead of being sick of the world, is attached to all elegant socialities and amities ; that he uses silver cups instead of maple bowls, shows his scallop-shell among other curiosities in his cabinet, and will treat the passing pilgrim with pure water from the spring, if he insists upon that beverage, but will first offer him a glass of the yellow cowslip-wine, the cooling claret, or the sparkling champagne.

Perhaps we are all beginning to get a little hungry, but it is too soon to breakfast; so, leaving the village of Grassmere on the right, keep your eye on Helm-crag, while we are finding, without seeking, our way up Easdale. Easdale is an arm of Grassmere, and in the words of Mr Green the artist, "it is in places profusely wooded, and charmingly sequestered among the mountains." Here you may hunt the waterfalls, in rainy weather easily run down, but difficult of detection in a drought. Several pretty rustic bridges cross and recross the main stream and its tributaries ; the cottages, in nook and on hill-side, are among the most picturesque and engaging in

the whole country; the vale widens into spacious and noble meadow-grounds, on which might suitably stand the mansion of any nobleman in England—as you near its head, everything gets wild and broken, with a slight touch of dreariness, and by no very difficult ascent we might reach Easdale-tarn in less than an hour's walking from Grassmere—a lonely and impressive scene, and the haunt of the angler almost as frequently as of the shepherd.

How far can we enjoy the beauty of external nature under a sharp appetite for breakfast or dinner? On our imagination the effect of hunger is somewhat singular. We no longer regard sheep, for instance, as the fleecy or the bleating flock. Their wool or their baaing is nothing to us—we think of necks, and jigots, and saddles of mutton; and even the lamb frisking on the sunny bank is eaten by us in the shape of steaks and fry. If it is in the morning, we see no part of the cow but her udder, distilling richest milkiness. Instead of ascending to heaven on the smoke of a cottage chimney, we put our arms round the column, and descend on the lid of the great pan preparing the family breakfast. Every interesting object in the landscape seems edible—our mouth waters all over the vale—as the village clock tolls eight, we involuntarily say grace, and Price on the Picturesque gives way to Meg Dods's Cookery.

Mrs Bell of the Red Lion Inn, Grassmere, can give a breakfast with any woman in England. She bakes incomparable bread—firm, close, compact, and white, thin-crusted, and admirably raised. Her yeast always works well. What butter! Before it a primrose must hide its unyellowed head. Then jam of the finest quality, goose, rasp, and strawberry! and as the jam is, so are her jellies. Hens cackle that the eggs are fresh—and these shrimps were scraping the sand last night in the Whitehaven sea. What glorious bannocks of barley-meal! Crisp wheaten cakes, too, no thicker than a wafer. Do not, our good sir, appropriate that cut of pickled salmon; it is heavier than it looks, and will weigh about four pounds. One might live a thousand years, yet never weary of such mutton-ham. Virgin honey, indeed! Let us hope that the bees were not smothered, but by some gracious disciple of Bonar or Huber decoyed from a full hive into an empty one, with half the summer and all the autumn before them to build

and saturate their new Comb-Palace. No bad thing is a cold pigeon-pie, especially of cushats. To hear them cooing in the centre of a wood is one thing, and to see them lying at the bottom of a pie is another—which is the better, depends entirely on time, place, and circumstance. Well, a beef-steak at breakfast is rather startling—but let us try a bit with these fine ingenuous youthful potatoes, from a light sandy soil on a warm slope. Next to the country clergy, smugglers are the most spiritual of characters; and we verily believe that to be "sma' still." Our dear sir—you are in orders, we believe—will you have the goodness to return thanks? Yes, now you may ring the bell for the bill. Moderate indeed! With a day's work before one, there is nothing like the deep broad basis of breakfast.

STROLL TO GRASSMERE.

SECOND SAUNTER.

It is yet only ten o'clock—and what a multitude of thoughts and feelings, sights and sounds, lights and shadows, have been ours since sunrise! Had we been in bed, all would have remained unfelt and unknown. But, to be sure, one dream might have been worth them all. Dreams, however, when they are over, are gone, be they of bliss or bale, heaven or the shades. No one weeps over a dream. With such tears no one would sympathise. Give us reality, "the sober certainty of waking bliss," and to it memory shall cling. Let the object of our sorrow belong to the living world, and, transient though it be, its power may be immortal. Away then, as of little worth, all the unsubstantial and wavering world of dreams, and in their place give us the very humblest humanities, so much the better if enjoyed in some beautiful scene of nature like this, where all is steadfast but the clouds, whose very being is change, and the flow of waters that have been in motion since the Flood.

Ha! a splendid equipage with a coronet. And out steps, handed by her elated husband, a high-born beautiful and graceful bride. They are making a tour of the Lakes, and the honeymoon hath not yet filled her horns. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on this earth, here it is—youth, elegance, health, rank, riches, and love—all united in ties that death alone can sunder. How they hang towards each other—the blissful pair! Blind in their passion to all the scenery they came to admire, or beholding it but by fits and snatches, with eyes that can see only one object. She hath already learnt to forget father and mother, and sister and brother, and all the young creatures like herself—every

one—that shared the pastimes and the confidence of her virgin youthhood. With her, as with Genevieve—

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of Love,
> And feed his sacred flame!"

And will this holy state of the spirit endure? No—it will fade, and fade, and fade away, so imperceptibly, so unconsciously (so like the shortening of the long summer-days, that lose minute after minute of the light, till again we hear the yellow leaves rustling in autumnal twilight), that the heart within that snow-drifted bosom will know not how great has been the change, till at last it shall be told the truth, and know that all mortal emotion, however paradisiacal, is born to die.

Fain would we believe that forebodings like these are, on all such occasions, whispered by a blind and ignorant misanthropy, and that of wedded life it may generally be said,

> "O, happy state, where souls together draw,
> Where love is liberty, and nature law!"

What profound powers of affection, grief, pity, sympathy, delight, and religion belong, by its constitution, to the frame of every human soul! And if the courses of life have not greatly thwarted the divine dispensations of nature, will they not all rise into genial play within bosoms consecrated to each other's happiness, till comes between them the cold hand of death? It would seem that everything fair and good must flourish under that holy necessity—everything foul and bad fade away; and that no quarrel or unkindness could ever be between pilgrims travelling together through time to eternity, whether their path lead through an Eden or a waste. Habit itself comes with humble hearts to be gracious and benign; they who have once loved, will not, for that very reason, cease to love; memory shall brighten when hope decays; and if the present be not now so blissful, so thrilling, so steeped in rapture as it was in the golden prime, yet shall it without repining suffice to them whose thoughts borrow unconsciously sweet comforts from the past and future, and have been taught by mutual cares and sorrows to indulge tempered expectations of the best earthly felicity. And is it not so?

How much tranquillity and contentment in human homes! Calm onflowings of life shaded in domestic privacy, and seen but at times coming out into the open light! What brave patience under poverty! What beautiful resignation in grief! Riches take wings to themselves and flee away—yet without and within the door there is the decency of a changed, not an unhappy lot—The clouds of adversity darken men's characters even as if they were the shadows of dishonour, but conscience quails not in the gloom—The well out of which humility hath her daily drink, is nearly dried up to the very spring, but she upbraideth not Heaven—Children, those flowers that make the hovel's earthen floor delightful as the glades of Paradise, wither in a day, but there is holy comfort in the mother's tears; nor are the groans of the father altogether without relief—for they have gone whither they came, and are blooming now in the bowers of heaven.

Reverse the picture—and tremble for the fate of those whom God hath made one, and whom no one man must put asunder. In common natures, what hot and sensual passions, whose gratification ends in indifference, disgust, loathing, or hatred! What a power of misery, from fretting to madness, lies in that mean but mighty word—Temper! The face, to whose meek beauty smiles seemed native during the days of virgin love, shows now but a sneer, a scowl, a frown, or a glare of scorn. The shape of those features is still fine—the eye of the gazelle—the Grecian nose and forehead—the ivory teeth, so small and regular—and thin line of ruby lips breathing Circassian luxury—the snow-drifts of the bosom still heave there—a lovelier waist Apollo never encircled stepping from the chariot of the sun—nor limbs more graceful did ever Diana veil beneath the shadows of Mount Latmos. But she is a fiend—a devil incarnate, and the sovereign beauty of three counties has made your house a hell.

But suppose that you have had the sense and sagacity to marry a homely wife—or one comely at the best—nay, even that you have sought to secure your peace by admitted ugliness—or wedded a woman whom all tongues call—plain; then may an insurance-ticket, indeed, flame like the sun in miniature on the front of your house—but what Joint-Stock Company can undertake to repay the loss incurred by the perpetual singeing of the smouldering flames of strife, that blaze

up without warning at bed and board, and keep you in an everlasting alarm of fire? We defy you to utter the most glaring truth that shall not be instantly contradicted. The most rational proposals for a day or hour of pleasure, at home or abroad, are on the nail negatived as absurd. If you dine at home every day for a month, she wonders why nobody asks you out, and fears you take no trouble to make yourself agreeable. If you dine from home one day in a month, then are you charged with being addicted to tavern-clubs. Children are perpetual bones of contention—there is hatred and sorrow in house-bills—rent and taxes are productive of endless grievances; and although education be an excellent thing—indeed quite a fortune in itself—especially to a poor Scotsman going to England, where all the people are barbarous—yet is it irritatingly expensive when a great Northern Nursery sends out its hordes, and gawky hoydens and hobbletehoys are getting themselves accomplished in the foreign languages, music, drawing, geography, the use of the globes, and the dumb-bells.

> "Let observation, with extensive view,
> Survey mankind from China to Peru,"

(two bad lines, by the way, though written by Dr Johnson) —and observation will find the literature of all countries filled with sarcasms against the marriage-life. Our old Scottish songs and ballads especially, delight in representing it as a state of ludicrous misery and discomfort. There is little or no talk of horns—the dilemma of English wit; but every individual moment of every individual minute, of every individual hour of every individual day, and so on, has its peculiar, appropriate, characteristic, and incurable wretchedness. Yet the delightful thing is, that in spite of all this jeering and gibing, and grinning and hissing, and pointing with the finger—marrying and giving in marriage, births and christenings, continue their career of prosperity; and the legitimate population doubles itself somewhere about every thirty-five years. Single houses rise out of the earth—double houses become villages—villages towns—towns cities—and our Metropolis is itself a world!

While the lyrical poetry of Scotland is thus rife with reproach against wedlock, it is equally rife with panegyric on

the tender passion that leads into its toils. In one page you shudder in a cold sweat over the mean miseries of the poor "gudeman;" in the next you see, unconscious of the same approaching destiny, the enamoured youth lying on his Mary's bosom beneath the milk-white thorn. The pastoral pipe is tuned under a fate that hurries on all living creatures to love; and not one lawful embrace is shunned from any other fears than those which of themselves spring up in the poor man's thoughtful heart. The wicked betray, and the weak fall—bitter tears are shed at midnight from eyes once bright as the day—fair faces never smile again, and many a hut has its broken heart—hope comes and goes, finally vanquishing, or yielding to despair—crowned passion dies the sated death, or, with increase of appetite, grows by what it feeds on—wide, but unseen, over all the regions of the land, are cheated hopes, vain desires, gnawing jealousy, dispirited fear, and swarthy-souled revenge—beseechings, seductions, suicides, and insanities—and all, all spring from the root of Love; yet all the nations of the earth call the Tree blest, and long as time endures, will continue to flock thither panting to devour the fruitage, of which every other golden globe is poison and death.

Smile away then, with all thy most irresistible blandishments, thou young and happy Bride! What business have we to prophesy bedimming tears to those resplendent eyes? or that the talisman of that witching smile can ever lose its magic? Are not the high-born daughters of England also the high-souled? And have not honour and virtue, and charity and religion, guarded for centuries the lofty line of thy pure and unpolluted blood? Joyful, therefore, mayst thou be, as the dove in the sunshine on the Tower-top—and as the dove serene, when she sitteth on her nest within the yew-tree's gloom, far within the wood!

Passing from our episode, let us say that we are too well acquainted with your taste, feeling, and judgment, to tell you on what objects to gaze or glance, in such a scene as the vale and village of Grassmere. Of yourselves you will find out the nooks and corners from which the pretty white-washed and flowering cottages do most picturesquely combine with each other, and with the hills, and groves, and old church-tower.

Without our guiding hand will you ascend knoll and eminence, be there pathway or no pathway, and discover for yourselves new Lake-Landscapes. Led by your own sweet and idle, chaste and noble fancies, you will disappear, single, or in pairs and parties, into little woody wildernesses, where you will see nothing but ground-flowers and a glimmering contiguity of shade. Solitude sometimes, you know, is best society, and short retirement urges sweet return. Various travels or voyages of discovery may be undertaken, and their grand object attained in little more than an hour. The sudden whirr of a cushat is an incident, or the leaping of a lamb among the broom. In the quiet of nature, matchless seems the music of the milkmaid's song—and of the hearty laugh of the haymakers, crossing the meadow in rows, how sweet the cheerful echo from Helm-crag! Grassmere appears by far the most beautiful place in all the Lake-country. You buy a field—build a cottage—and in imagination lie (for they are too short to enable you to sit) beneath the shadow of your own trees!

In an English village—highland or lowland—seldom is there any spot so beautiful as the churchyard. That of Grassmere is especially so, with the pensive shadows of the old church-tower settling over its cheerful graves. Ay, its cheerful graves! Startle not at the word as too strong—for the pigeons are cooing in the belfry, the stream is murmuring round the mossy churchyard wall, a few lambs are lying on the mounds, and flowers laughing in the sunshine over the cells of the dead. But hark! the bell tolls—one—one—one—a funeral knell, speaking not of time, but of eternity! To-day there is to be a burial—and close to the wall of the Tower you see the new-dug grave.

Hush! The sound of singing voices in yonder wood, deadened by the weight of umbrage! Now it issues forth into the clear air, and now all is silence—but the pause speaks of death. Again the melancholy swell ascends the sky—and then comes slowly along the funeral procession, the coffin borne aloft, and the mourners all in white; for it is a virgin who is carried to her last home. Let every head be reverently uncovered while the psalm enters the gate, and the bier is borne for holy rites along the chancel of the church, and laid down close to the altar. A smothered sobbing disturbeth not the service—'tis a human spirit breathing in

accordance with the divine. Mortals weeping for the immortal —Earth's passions cleaving to one who is now in heaven.

Was she one flower of many, and singled out by death's unsparing finger from a wreath of beauty, whose remaining blossoms seem now to have lost all their fragrance and all their brightness? Or was she the sole delight of her grey-haired parents' eyes, and is the voice of joy extinguished in their low-roofed home for ever? Had her loveliness been beloved, and had her innocent hopes anticipated the bridal-day, nor her heart, whose beatings were numbered, ever feared that narrow bed? All that we know is her name and age—you see them glittering on her coffin—"Anabella Irvine, aged xix years"!

The day seems something dim, now that we are all on our way back to Ambleside; and although the clouds are neither heavier nor more numerous than before, somehow or other the sun is a little obscured. We must not indulge too long in a mournful mood—yet let us all sit down under the shadow of this grove of sycamores, overshadowing this reedy bay of Rydal-mere, and listen to a Tale of Tears.

Many a tame tradition, embalmed in a few pathetic verses, lives for ages, while the memory of the most affecting incidents, to which genius has allied no general emotion, fades like the mist, and leaves heart-rending griefs undeplored. Elegies and dirges might indeed have well been sung amidst the green ruins of yonder Cottage, that looks now almost like a fallen wall—at best, the remnants of a cattle-shed shaken down by the storm.

Thirty years ago—how short a time in national history—how long in that of private sorrows!—all tongues were speaking of the death that there befell; and to have seen the weeping, you would have thought that the funeral could never have been forgotten. But stop now the shepherd on the hill, and ask him who lived in that nook, and chance is he knows not even their name, much less the story of their afflictions. It was inhabited by Allan Fleming, his wife, and an only child, known familiarly in her own small world by the name of Lucy of the Fold. In almost every district among the mountains, there is its peculiar pride—some one creature to whom nature has been especially kind, and whose personal beauty, sweetness of disposition, and felt superiority of mind

and manner, single her out, unconsciously, as an object of attraction and praise, making her the May-day Queen of the unending year. Such a darling was Lucy Fleming ere she had finished her thirteenth year; and strangers, who had heard tell of her loveliness, often dropt in, as if by accident, to see the Beauty of Rydal-mere. Here parents rejoiced in their child; nor was there any reason why they should dislike the expression of delight and wonder with which so many regarded her. Shy was she as a woodland bird, but as fond too of her nest; and when there was nothing near to disturb her, her life was almost a perpetual hymn. From joy to sadness, and from sadness to joy; from silence to song, and from song to silence; from stillness like that of the butterfly on the flower, to motion like that of the same creature wavering in the sunshine over the wood-top—was to Lucy as welcome a change as the change of lights and shadows, breezes and calms, in the mountain-country of her birth.

One summer day, a youthful stranger appeared at the door of the house, and after an hour's stay, during which Lucy was from home, asked if they would let him have lodging with them for a few months—a single room for bed and books, and that he would take his meals with the family. Enthusiastic boy! to him poetry had been the light of life, nor did ever creature of poetry belong more entirely than he to the world of imagination. He had come into the free mountain region from the confinement of college walls, and his spirit expanded within him like a rainbow. No eyes had he for realities—all nature was seen in the light of genius—not a single object at sunrise and sunset the same. All was beautiful within the circle of the green hill-tops, whether shrouded in the soft mists or clearly outlined in a cloudless sky. Home, friends, colleges, cities—all sunk away into oblivion, and Harry Howard felt as if wafted off on the wings of a spirit, and set down in a land beyond the sea, foreign to all he had before experienced, yet in its perfect and endless beauty appealing every hour more tenderly and strongly to a spirit awakened to new power, and revelling in new emotion. In that cottage he took up his abode. In a few weeks came a library of books in all languages; and there was much wondering talk over all the countryside about the mysterious young stranger who now lived at the Fold.

Every day—and, when he chose to absent himself from his haunts among the hills, every hour was Lucy before the young poet's eyes—and every hour did her beauty wax more beautiful in his imagination. Who Mr Howard was, or even if that were indeed his real name, no one knew; but none doubted that he was of gentle birth, and all with whom he had ever conversed in his elegant amenity, could have sworn that a youth so bland and free, and with such a voice, and such eyes, would not have injured the humblest of God's creatures, much less such a creature as Lucy of the Fold. It was indeed even so—for, before the long summer days were gone, he who had never had a sister, loved her even as if she had slept on the same maternal bosom. Father or mother he now had none—indeed, scarcely one near relation—although he was rich in this world's riches, but in them poor in comparison with the noble endowments that nature had lavished upon his mind. His guardians took little heed of the splendid but wayward youth—and knew not now whither his fancies had carried him, were it even to some savage land. Thus the Fold became to him the one dearest roof under the roof of heaven. All the simple ongoings of that humble home, love and imagination beautified into poetry; and all the rough or coarser edges of lowly life were softened away in the light of genius that transmuted everything on which it fell; while all the silent intimations which nature gave there of her primal sympathies, in the hut as fine and forceful as in the hall, showed to his excited spirit pre-eminently lovely, and chained it to the hearth, around which was read the morning and the evening prayer.

What wild schemes does not love imagine, and in the face of very impossibility achieve! "I will take Lucy to myself, if it should be in place of all the world. I will myself shed light over her being, till in a new spring it shall be adorned with living flowers that fade not away, perennial and self-renewed. In a few years the bright docile creature will have the soul of a very angel—and then, before God and at His holy altar, mine shall she become for ever—here and hereafter—in this paradise of earth, and, if more celestial be, in the paradise of heaven."

Thus two summers and two winters wheeled away into the past; and in the change, imperceptible from day to day, but

glorious at last, wrought on Lucy's nature by communication with one so prodigally endowed, scarcely could her parents believe it was their same child, except that she was dutiful as before, as affectionate, and as fond of all the familiar objects, dead or living, round and about her birthplace. She had now grown to woman's stature—tall, though she scarcely seemed so except when among her playmates; and in her maturing loveliness, fulfilling, and far more than fulfilling, the fair promise of her childhood. Never once had the young stranger—stranger no more—spoken to daughter, father, or mother, of his love. Indeed, for all that he felt towards Lucy there must have been some other word than love. Tenderness, which was almost pity—an affection that was often sad—wonder at her surpassing beauty, nor less at her unconsciousness of its power—admiration of her spiritual qualities, that ever rose up to meet instruction as if already formed—and that heart-throbbing that stirs the blood of youth when the innocent eyes it loves are beaming in the twilight through smiles or through tears,—these, and a thousand other feelings, and above all, the creative faculty of a poet's soul, now constituted his very being when Lucy was in presence, nor forsook him when he was alone among the mountains.

At last it was known through the country that Mr Howard—the stranger, the scholar, the poet, the elegant gentleman, of whom nobody knew much, but whom everybody loved, and whose father must at the least have been a lord, was going—in a year or less—to marry the daughter of Allan Fleming—Lucy of the Fold. O, grief and shame to the parents—if still living—of the noble Boy! O, sorrow for himself when his passion dies—when the dream is dissolved—and when, in place of the angel of light who now moves before him, he sees only a child of earth, lowly born, and long rudely bred—a being only fair as many others are fair, sister in her simplicity to maidens no less pleasing than she, and partaking of many weaknesses, frailties, and faults now unknown to herself in her happiness, and to him in his love! Was there no one to rescue them from such a fate—from a few months of imaginary bliss, and from many years of real bale? How could such a man as Allan Fleming be so infatuated as sell his child to fickle youth, who would soon desert her broken-hearted? Yet kind thoughts, wishes, hopes, and beliefs prevailed;

nor were there wanting stories of the olden time, of low-born maidens married to youths of high estate, and raised from hut to hall, becoming mothers of a lordly line of sons, that were counsellors to Kings and Princes.

In Spring, Mr Howard went away for a few months—it was said to the great city—and on his return at midsummer, Lucy was to be his bride. They parted with a few peaceful tears, and though absent were still together. And now a letter came, saying that before another Sabbath he would be at the Fold. A few fields in Easdale, long mortgaged beyond their fee-simple by the hard-working statesman from whom they reluctantly were passing away, had meanwhile been purchased by Mr Howard, and in that cottage they were to abide, till they had built for themselves a house a little further up the side of the sylvan hill, below the shadow of Helm-crag. Lucy saw the Sabbath of his return and its golden sun, but it was in her mind's eye only; for ere it was to descend behind the hills, she was not to be among the number of living things.

Up Forest-Ullswater the youth had come by the light of the setting sun; and as he crossed the mountains to Grassmere by the majestic pass of the Hawse, still as every new star arose in heaven, with it arose as lustrous a new emotion from the bosom of his betrothed. The midnight hour had been fixed for his return to the Fold; and as he reached the cliffs above White-moss, according to agreement a light was burning in the low window, the very planet of love. It seemed to shed a bright serenity over all the vale, and the moon-glittering waters of Rydal-mere were as an image of life, pure, lonely, undisturbed, and at the pensive hour how profound! "Blessing and praise be to the gracious God! who framed my spirit so to delight in His beautiful and glorious creation—blessing and praise to the Holy One, for the boon of my Lucy's innocent and religious love!" Prayers crowded fast into his soul, and tears of joy fell from his eyes, as he stood at the threshold, almost afraid, in the trembling of life-deep affection, to meet her first embrace.

In the silence, sobs and sighs, and one or two long deep groans! Then in another moment, he saw, through the open door of the room where Lucy used to sleep, several figures moving to and fro in the light, and one figure upon its knees —who else could it be but her father! Unnoticed he became

one of the pale-faced company—and there he beheld her on her bed, mute and motionless, her face covered with a deplorable beauty—eyes closed, and her hands clasped upon her breast! "Dead, dead, dead!" muttered in his ringing ears a voice from the tombs, and he fell down in the midst of them with great violence upon the floor.

Encircled with arms that lay round him softer and silkier far than flower-wreaths on the neck of a child who has laid him down from play, was he when he awoke from that fit—lying even on his own maiden's bed, and within her very bosom, that beat yet, although soon about to beat no more. At that blest awakening moment, he might have thought he saw the first glimpse of light of the morning after his marriage-day; for her face was turned towards his breast, and with her faint breathings he felt the touch of tears. Not tears alone now bedimmed those eyes, for tears he could have kissed away; but the blue lids were heavy with something that was not slumber—the orbs themselves were scarcely visible—and her voice—it was gone, to be heard never again, till in the choir of white-robed spirits that sing at the right hand of God.

Yet no one doubted that she knew him—him who had dropt down, like a superior being, from another sphere, on the innocence of her simple childhood—had taught her to know so much of her own soul—to love her parents with a profounder and more holy love—to see, in characters more divine, Heaven's promises of forgiveness to every contrite heart—and a life of perfect blessedness beyond death and the grave. A smile that shone over her face the moment that she had been brought to know that he had come at last, and was nigh at hand—and that never left it while her bosom moved—no—not for all the three days and nights that he continued to sit beside the corpse, when father and mother were forgetting their cares in sleep—that smile told all who stood around, watching her departure, neighbour, friend, priest, parent, and him the suddenly distracted and desolate, that in the very moment of expiration she knew him well, and was recommending him and his afflictions to the pity of One who died to save sinners.

Three days and three nights, we have said, did he sit beside her who so soon was to have been his bride; and come or go who would into the room, he saw them not—his sight was fixed

on the winding-sheet, eyeing it, without a single tear, from feet to forehead, and sometimes looking up to heaven. As men forgotten in dungeons have lived miserably long without food, so did he—and so he would have done, on and on to the most far-off funeral day. From that one chair, close to the bedside, he never rose. Night after night, when all the vale was hushed, he never slept. Through one of the midnights there had been a great thunderstorm, the lightning smiting a cliff close to the cottage; but it seemed that he heard it not—and during the floods of next day, to him the roaring vale was silent. On the morning of the funeral, the old people—for now they seemed to be old—wept to see him sitting still beside their dead child; for each of the few remaining hours had now its own sad office, and a man had come to nail down the coffin. Three black specks suddenly alighted on the face of the corpse—and then off—and on—and away—and returning—was heard the buzzing of large flies, attracted by beauty in its corruption. "Ha—ha!" starting up, he cried in horror—"What birds of prey are these, whom Satan has sent to devour the corpse?" He became stricken with a sort of palsy—and, being led out to the open air, was laid down, seemingly as dead as her within, on the green daisied turf, where, beneath the shadow of the sycamore, they had so often sat, building up beautiful visions of a long blissful life.

The company assembled—but not before his eyes—the bier was lifted up and moved away down the sylvan slope, and away round the head of the Lake, and over the wooden bridge, accompanied, here and there, as it passed the wayside houses on the road to Grassmere, by the sound of psalms—but he saw—he heard not;—when the last sound of the spade rebounded from the smooth arch of the grave, he was not by—but all the while he was lying where they left him, with one or two pitying dalesmen at his head and feet. When he awoke again and rose up, the cottage of the Fold was as if she had never been born—for she had vanished for ever and aye, and her sixteen years' smiling life was all extinguished in the dust.

Weeks and months passed on, and still there was a vacant wildness in his eyes, and a mortal ghastliness all over his face, inexpressive of a reasonable soul. It scarcely seemed that he knew where he was, or in what part of the earth, yet, when left by himself, he never sought to move beyond the bounda-

ries of the Fold. During the first faint glimmerings of returning reason, he would utter her name, over and over many times, with a mournful voice, but still he knew not that she was dead—then he began to caution them all to tread softly, for that sleep had fallen upon her, and her fever in its blessed balm might abate—then with groans too affecting to be borne by those who heard them, he would ask why, since she was dead, God had the cruelty to keep him, her husband, in life; and finally, and last of all, he imagined himself in Grassmere Churchyard, and clasping a little mound on the green, which it was evident he thought was her grave, he wept over it for hours and hours, and kissed it, and placed a stone at its head, and sometimes all at once broke out into fits of laughter, till the hideous fainting-fits returned, and after long convulsions left him lying as if stone-dead. As for his bodily frame, when Lucy's father lifted it up in his arms, little heavier was it than a bundle of withered fern. Nobody supposed that one so miserably attenuated and ghost-like could for many days be alive—yet not till the earth had thrice revolved round the sun did that body die, and then it was buried far away from the Fold, the banks of Rydal-water, and the sweet mountains of Westmoreland; for after passing like a shadow through many foreign lands, he ceased his pilgrimage in Palestine, even beneath the shadow of Mount Sion, and was laid, with a lock of hair—which, from the place it held, strangers knew to have belonged to one dearly beloved—close to his heart, on which it had lain so long, and was to moulder away in darkness together, by Christian hands and in a Christian sepulchre.

L'ENVOY.

Periodical literature is a type of many of the most beautiful things and interesting events in nature; or say, rather, that *they* are types of *it*—the Flowers and the Stars. As to Flowers, they are the prettiest periodicals ever published in folio—the leaves are wire-wove and hot-pressed by Nature's self; their circulation is wide over all the land; from castle to cottage they are regularly taken in; as old age bends over them, his youth is renewed; and you see childhood poring upon them pressed close to its very bosom. Some of them are ephemeral—their contents are exhaled between the rising and setting sun. Once a-week others break through their green, pink, or crimson cover; and how delightful, on the seventh day, smiles in the sunshine the Sabbath Flower—a Sunday publication perused without blame by the most religious—even before morning prayer! Each month, indeed, throughout the whole year, has its own Flower periodical. Some are annual, some biennial, some triennial, and there are perennials that seem to live for ever—and yet are still periodical—though our love will not allow us to know when they die, and phœnix-like reappear from their own ashes. So much for Flowers—typifying or typified;—leaves emblematical of pages—buds of binding—dew-veils of covers—and the wafting away of bloom and fragrance like the dissemination of fine feelings, bright fancies, and winged thoughts.

The Flowers are the periodicals of the earth—the Stars are the periodicals of heaven. With what unfailing regularity do the numbers issue forth! Hesperus and Lucifer! ye are one concern. The Pole-star is studied by all nations. How popular the poetry of the Moon! On what subject does not the Sun throw light? No fear of hurting your eyes by reading

that fine clear large type on that softened page. As you turn them over, one blue, another yellow, and another green, all are alike delightful to the pupil, dear as the very apple of his eye. Yes, the great Periodical Press of heaven is unceasingly at work—night and day; the only free power all over the world—'tis indeed like the air we breathe—if we have it not, we die.

Look, then, at all paper periodicals with pleasure, for sake of the Flowers and the Stars. Suppose them all extinct, and life would be like a flowerless earth, a starless heaven. We should soon forget the Seasons. The periodicals of the External would soon all lose their meaning, were there no longer any periodicals of the Internal. These are the lights and shadows of life, merrily dancing or gravely stealing over the dial; remembrancers of the past—teachers of the present—prophets of the future hours. Were they all dead, Spring would in vain renew her promise—wearisome would be the interminable summer days—the fruits of autumn tasteless—the winter ingle blink mournfully round the hearth. What are the blessed Seasons themselves, in nature and in Thomson, but periodicals of a larger growth? We should doubt the goodness of that man's heart, who loved not the periodical literature of earth and sky—who would not weep to see one of its flowers wither—one of its stars fall—one beauty die on its humble bed—one glory drop from its lofty sphere. Let them bloom and burn on—flowers in which there is no poison, stars in which there is no disease—whose blossoms are all sweet, and whose rays are all sanative—both alike steeped in dew, and both, to the fine ear of nature's worshipper, bathed in music.

Pomposo never reads Magazine poetry—nor, we presume, ever looks at a field or wayside flower. He studies only the standard authors. He walks only in gardens with high brick walls—and then admires only at a hint from the head-gardener. Pomposo does not know that many of the finest poems of our day first appeared in magazines—or, worse still, in newspapers; and that in our periodicals, daily and weekly, equally with the monthlies and quarterlies, is to be found the best criticism of poetry anywhere extant, superior far, in that unpretending form, to nine-tenths of the learned lucubrations of Germany—though some of it, too, is good—almost as one's heart could desire. What is the circulation even of a popular

volume of verses—if any such there be—to that of a number of Maga? Hundreds of thousands at home peruse it before it is a week old—as many abroad ere the moon has thrice renewed her horns; and the Series ceases not—regular as the Seasons that make up the perfect year. Our periodical literature—say of it what you will—gives light to the heads and heat to the hearts of millions of our race. The greatest and best men of the age have not disdained to belong to the brotherhood; and thus the hovel holds what must not be missing in the hall—the furniture of the cot is the same as that of the palace—and duke and ditcher read their lessons from the same page.

Good people have said, and it would be misanthropical to disbelieve or discredit their judgment, that our Prose is original—nay, has created a new era in the history of Periodical Literature. Only think of that, Christopher, and up with your Tail like a Peacock! Why, there is some comfort in that reflection, while we sit rubbing our withered hands up and down on these shrivelled shanks. Our feet are on the fender, and that fire is felt on our face; but we verily believe our ice-cold shanks would not shrink from the application of the red-hot poker. Peter has a notion that but for that red-hot poker the fire would go out; so to humour him we let it remain in the ribs, and occasionally brandish it round our head in moments of enthusiasm when the Crutch looks tame, and the Knout a silken leash for Italian Greyhound.

Old Simonides—old Mimnermus—old Theognis—old Solon—old Anacreon—old Sophocles—old Pindar—old Hesiod—old Homer—and old Methuselah! What mean we by the word *old?* All these men are old in three lights—they lived to a raven age—long long ago—and we heard tell of them in our youth. Their glory dawned on us in a dream of life's golden prime—and far away seems now that dawn, as if in another world beyond a million seas! In that use of the word "old," far from us is all thought of dotage or decay. Old are those great personages as the stars are old; a heaven there is in which are seen shining, for ever young, all the most ancient spiritual "orbs of Song."

In our delight, too, we love to speak of old Venus and of old Cupid—of old Eve and of old Cleopatra—of old Helen and of old Dalilah; yea, of old Psyche, though her aerial wings

are as rainbow bright as the first hour she waved them in the eye of the youthful Sun.

How full of endearment "old boy!"—"old girl!" "Old Christopher North!"—"old Maga!" To our simplest sayings age seems to give a consecration which youth reveres. And why may not our hand, withered somewhat though it be, but yet unpalsied, point out aloft to heedless eyes single light or constellation, or lily by herself or in groups unsuspected along the waysides of our mortal pilgrimage?

Age like ours is even more lovable than venerable; and, thinking on ourselves, were we a young woman, we should assuredly marry an old man. Indeed, no man ought to marry before thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty; and, were it not that life is so short, soon enough at threescore and ten. At seventy you are sager than ever, though scarcely so strong. You and life love each other as well as ever; yet 'tis unpleasant, when sailing on Windermere or Lochlomond with your bride, to observe the Man in the Honeymoon looking at you with a congratulatory grin of condolence, to fear that the old villain will smile over your grave in the Season of Kirns and Harvest Homes, when the fiddle is heard in every farmhouse, and the bagpipes are lowing like cattle on a thousand hills. Fain would he insure his life on the Tipperary Tables. But the enamoured annuitant is haunted with visions of his own Funeral deploying in a long line of chariots—one at the head of all armed with scythes—through the city, into the wide gates of the Greyfriars. Lovely is his bride in white, nor less so his widow in black—more so in grey, portentous of a great change. Sad, too, to the Sage the thought of leaving his first-born as yet unborn—or if born, haply an elfish creature with a precocious countenance, looking as if he had begun life with borrowing ten years at least from his own father—auld-farrant as a Fairy, and gash as the Last of the Lairds.

Dearly do we love the young—yea, the young of all animals—the young swallows twittering from their straw-built shed—the young lambs bleating on the lea—the young bees, God bless them! on their first flight away off to the heather—the young butterflies, who, born in the morning, will die of old age ere night—the young salmon-fry glorying in the gravel at the first feeling of their fins—the young adders basking, ere they can bite, in the sun, as yet unconscious, like sucking

satirists, of their stings—young pigs, pretty dears! all a-squeak with their curled tails after prolific grumphie—young lions and tigers, charming cubs! like very Christian children nuzzling in their nurse's breast—young devils, ere Satan has sent them to Sin, who keeps a fashionable boarding-school in Hades, and sends up into the world above-ground only her finished scholars.

Oh! lad of the lightsome forehead! Thou art smiling at Us; and for the sake of our own Past we enjoy thy Present, and pardon the contumely with which thou silently insultest our thin grey hairs. Just such another "were we at Ravensburg." "*Carpe Diem*" was then our motto, as now it is yours; "no fear that dinner cool," for we fed then, as you feed now, on flowers and fruits of Eden. We lived then under the reign of the Seven Senses; Imagination was Prime Minister, and Reason, as Lord-Chancellor, had the keeping of the Royal Conscience; and they were kings, not tyrants—we subjects, not slaves. Supercilious as thou art, Puer, art thou as well read in Greek as we were at thy flowering age? Come close that we may whisper in thine ear—while we lean our left shoulder on thine—our right on the Crutch. The time will come when thou wilt be, O Son of the Morning! even like unto the shadow by thy side! Was he not once a mountaineer? If he be a vainglorious boaster, give him the lie, Ben-y-glo and thy brotherhood—ye who so often heard our shouts mixed with the red-deer's belling—tossed back in exultation by Echo, Omnipresent Auditress on youth's golden hills.

Know, all ye Neophytes, that three lovely Sisters often visit the old man's solitude—Memory, Imagination, Hope. It would be hard to say which is the most beautiful. Memory has deep, dark, quiet eyes, and when she closes their light, the long eyelashes lie like shadows on her pensive cheeks, that smile faintly as if the dreamer were half asleep—a visionary slumber, which sometimes the dewdrop melting on the leaf will break, sometimes not the thunder-peal with all its echoes. Imagination is a brighter and bolder Beauty, with large lamping eyes of uncertain colour, as if fluctuating with rainbow light, and with features fine as those which Grecian genius gave to the Muses in the Parian Marble, yet in their daring delicacy defined like the face of Apollo. As for Hope

—divinest of the divine—Collins, in one long line of light, has painted the picture of the angel,—

"And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair."

All our great prose-writers owe the glory of their power to our great poets. Even Hobbes translated Homer as well—that is as ill—as Thucidydes; the Epic in his prime after eighty; the History in his youth at forty; and it is fearful to dream what the brainful and heartless metaphysician would have been, had he never heard of the Iliad and the Odyssey. What is the greatest of prose-writers in comparison with a great poet? Nay—we shall not be deterred by the fear of self-contradiction (see our "Stroll to Grassmere") from asking who is a great prose-writer? We cannot name one; they all sink in Shakespeare. Campbell finely asks and answers—

"Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh! what were man? a world without a sun."

Suppose the world without poetry—how absurd would seem the Sun! Strip the word "phenomena" of its poetical meaning, and forthwith the whole human race, "moving about in worlds *realised*," would lose their powers of speech. But, thank Heaven! we are Makers all. Inhabiting, we verily believe, a real, and substantial, and palpable outer world, which nevertheless shall one day perish like a scroll, we build our bowers of joy in the Apparent, and lie down to rest in a drapery of Dreams.

Thus we often love to dream our silent way even through the noisy world. And dreamers are with dreamers spiritually, though in the body apart; nor wandering at will think they whence they come, or whither they are going, assured by delight that they will reach their journey's end—like a bee, that in many a musical gyration goes humming round men's heads and tree-tops, aimlessly curious in his joy, yet knowing instinctively the straight line that intersects all those airy circles, leading to and fro between his hive in the garden and the honey-dew on the heather hills.

What can it be that now recalls to our remembrance a few lines of Esop, the delightful old Fabulist, the Merry and Wise, who set our souls a-thinking and our hearts a-feeling in boyhood, by moral lessons read to them in almost every

incident befalling in life's common walks—solemn as Simonides in this his sole surviving elegiac strain?

"What weary woe, what endless strife
Bring'st thou to mortal men, O Life!
Each hour they draw their breath.
Alas! the wretches all despair
To flee the ills they cannot bear,
But through the gates of Death.

And yet how beautiful art Thou
On Earth and Sea—and on the brow
Of starry Heaven! The Night
Sends forth the moon Thee to adorn;
And thee to glorify the Morn
Restores the Orb of Light.

Yet all is full of Pain and Dread;
Bedrench'd in tears for ever shed;
The darkness render'd worse
By gleams of joy—and if by Heaven
A Blessing seemeth to be given,
It changes to a curse."

Even in our paraphrase are not these lines very impressive? In the original they are much more solemn. They are not querulous, yet full of lamentation. We see in them not a weak spirit quarrelling with fate, but a strong spirit subdued by a sense of the conditions on which life has been given; conditions against which it is vain to contend, to which it is hard to submit, but which may yet be borne by a will deriving strength from necessity, and in itself noble by nature. Nor, dark as the doctrine is, can we say it is false. Intellect and Imagination may from doleful experiences have too much generalised their inductions, so as to seem to themselves to have established the Law of Misery as the Law of Life. But perhaps it is only thus that the Truth can be made available to man, as it regards the necessity of Endurance. All is not wretchedness; but the soul seeks to support itself by the belief that it is really so. Holding that creed, it has no excuse for itself, if at any time it is stung to madness by misery, or grovels in the dust in a passion of grief; none, if at any time it delivers itself wholly up, abandoning itself to joy, and acts as if it trusted to the permanence

of any blessing under the law of Mutability. The Poet, in the hour of profound emotion, declares that every blessing sent from heaven is a Nemesis. That oracular response inspires awe. A salutary fear is kept alive in the foolish by such sayings of the wise. Even to us—now—they sound like a knell. Religion has instructed Philosophy; and for Fate we substitute God. But all men feel that the foundations of Faith are laid in the dark depths of their being, and that all human happiness is mysteriously allied with pain and sorrow. The most perfect bliss is ever awful, as if we enjoyed it under the shadow of some great and gracious wing that would not long be detained from heaven.

It is not for ordinary minds to attempt giving utterance to such simplicities. On their tongues truths become truisms. Sentiments, that seem always fresh, falling from the lips of moral wisdom, are stale in the mouths of men uninitiated in the greater mysteries. Genius colours common words with an impressive light, that makes them moral to all eyes—breathes into them an affecting music, that steals into all hearts like a revelation and a religion. They become memorable. They pass, as maxims, from generation to generation; and all because the divinity that is in every man's bosom responds to the truthful strain it had of yore itself inspired. Just so with the men we meet on our life-journey. One man is impressive in all his looks and words, on all serious or solemn occasions; and we carry away with us moral impressions from his eyes or lips. Another man says the same things, or nearly so, and perhaps with more fervour, and his locks are silver. But we forget his person in an hour; nor does his voice ever haunt our solitude. Simonides—Solon—Esop!—why do such lines of theirs as those assure us they were Sages? The same sentiments are the staple of many a sermon that has soothed sinners into snoring sleep.

Men take refuge even in ocular deception from despair. Over buried beauty, that once glowed with the same passion that consumes themselves, they build a white marble tomb, or a green grass grave, and forget much they ought to remember—all profounder thoughts—while gazing on the epitaph of letters or flowers. 'Tis a vision to their senses, with which Imagination would fain seek to delude Love. And 'tis well that the deception prospers; for what if Love could bid the

burial-ground give up or disclose its dead? Or if Love's eyes saw through dust as through air? What if this planet —which men call Earth—were at all times seen and felt to be a cemetery circling round the sun that feeds it with death, and not a globe of green animated with life—even as the dewdrop on the rose's leaf is animated with millions of invisible creatures, wantoning in bliss born of the sunshine and the vernal prime.

Are we sermonising overmuch in this our L'ENVOY to these our misnamed RECREATIONS? Even a sermon is not always useless; the few concluding sentences are sometimes luminous, like stars rising on a dull twilight; the little flower that attracted Park's eyes when he was fainting in the desert, was to him beauteous as the rose of Sharon; there is solemnity in the shadow of quiet trees on a noisy road; a churchyard may be felt even in a village fair; a face of sorrow passes by us in our gaiety, neither unfelt nor unremembered in its uncomplaining calm; and sweet from some still house in the city stir is

> "The voice of psalms, the simple song of praise."

We daresay you are a very modest person; but we are all given to self-glorification, private men and public, individuals and nations; and every one Era and Ego has been prouder than another of its respective achievements. To hear the Present Generation speak, such an elderly gentleman as the Past Generation begins to suspect that his personal origin lies hid in the darkness of antiquity; and worse—that he is of the Pechs. Now, we offer to back the Past Generation against the Present Generation, at any feat the Present Generation chooses, and give the long odds. Say Poetry. Well, we bring to the scratch a few champions—such as, Beattie, Cowper, Crabbe, Rogers, Bowles, Burns, Baillie, Campbell, Graham, Montgomery, Scott, Southey, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Hunt, Hogg, Shelley, Keates, Pollok, Cunningham, Bloomfield, Clare, and *risum teneatis amici*—Ourselves.

> "All with waistcoats of red and breeches of blue,
> And mighty long tails that come swingeing through."

And at sight of the cavalcade—for each poet is on his Pegasus —the champions of the Present Generation, accoutred in

corduroy kilts and top-boots, and on animals which, "well do we know, but dare not name," wheel to the right-about with "one dismal universal bray," brandishing their wooden sabres, till, frenzied by their own trumpeters, they charge madly a palisade in their own rear, and as dismounted cavalry make good their retreat. This in their strategics is called a drawn battle.

Heroes, alive or dead, of the Past Generation, we bid you hail! Exceeding happiness to have been born among such Births—to have lived among such Lives—to be buried among such Graves. O great glory to have seen such Stars rising one after another larger and more lustrous—at times, when dilated with delight, more like Moons than Stars—like Seraphs hovering over the earth they loved, though seeming so high up in heaven!

To whom now may the young enthusiast turn as to Beings of the same kind with himself, but of a higher order, and therefore with a love that fears no sin in its idolatry? The young enthusiast may turn to some of the living, but he will think more of others who are gone. The dead know not of his love, and he can hold no communion with the grave. But Poets never die—immortal in their works, the Library is the world of spirits; there they dwell, the same as in the flesh, when by meditation most cleansed and purified—yet with some holy change it seems—a change not in them but in us, who are stilled by the stillness, and attribute something supernatural to the Living Dead.

Since first this Golden Pen of ours—given us by One who meant it but for a memorial—began, many years ago, to let drop on paper a few careless words, what quires so distained—some pages, let us hope, with durable ink—have accumulated on our hands! Some haughty ones have chosen to say rather, how many leaves have been wafted away to wither? But not a few of the gifted—near and afar—have called on us with other voices—reminding us that long ago we were elected, on sight of our credentials—not indeed without a few black balls—into the Brotherhood. The shelf marked with our initials exhibits some half-dozen volumes only, and has room for scores. It may not be easily found in that vast Library; but, humble member as we are, we feel it now to be

a point of honour to make an occasional contribution to the Club. So here is the First Series of what we have chosen to call our Recreations. There have been much recasting and remoulding—many alterations, believed by us to have been wrought with no unskilful spirit of change—cruel, we confess, to our feelings, rejections of numerous lucubrations to their father dear—and if we may use such words, not a few new creations, in the same *genial* spirit in which we worked of old—not always unrewarded by sympathy, which is better than praise.

For kindness shown when kindness was most needed—for sympathy and affection—yea, love itself—for grief and pity not misplaced, though bestowed in a mistaken belief of our condition, forlorn indeed, but not wholly forlorn—for solace and encouragement sent to us from afar, from cities and solitudes, and from beyond seas and oceans, from brethren who never saw our face, and never may see it, we owe a debt of everlasting gratitude; and life itself must leave our heart, that beats not now as it used to beat, but with dismal trepidation, before it forget, or cease to remember as clearly as now it hears them, every one of the many words that came sweetly and solemnly to us from the Great and Good. Joy and sorrow make up the lot of our mortal estate, and by sympathy with them, we acknowledge our brotherhood with all our kind. We do far more. The strength that is untasked, lends itself to divide the load under which another is bowed; and the calamity that lies on the heads of men is lightened, while those who at the time are not called to bear, are yet willing to involve themselves in the sorrow of a brother. So soothed by such sympathy may a poor mortal be, that the wretch almost upbraids himself for transient gleams of gladness, as if he were false to the sorrow which he sighs to think he ought to have cherished more sacredly within his miserable heart.

One word embraces all these pages of ours—Memorials. Friends are lost to us by removal—for then even the dearest are often utterly forgotten. But let something that once was theirs suddenly meet our eyes, and in a moment, returning from the region of the rising or the setting sun, the friend of our youth seems at our side, unchanged his voice and his smile; or dearer to our eyes than ever, because of some

affecting change wrought on face and figure by climate and by years. Let it be but his name written with his own hand on the title-page of a book; or a few syllables on the margin of a favourite passage which long ago we may have read together, "when life itself was new," and poetry overflowed the whole world; or a lock of *her* hair in whose eyes we first knew the meaning of the word "depth." And if death hath stretched out the absence into the dim arms of eternity—and removed the distance away into that bourne from which no traveller returns—the absence and the distance of her on whose forehead once hung the relic we adore—what heart may abide the beauty of the ghost that doth sometimes at midnight appear at our sleepless bed, and with pale uplifted arms waft over us at once a blessing and a farewell!

Why so sad a word—*Farewell?* We should not weep in wishing welfare, nor sully felicity with tears. But we do weep because evil lies lurking in wait over all the earth for the innocent and the good, the happy and the beautiful; and, when guarded no more by our eyes, it seems as if the demon would leap out upon his prey. Or is it because we are so selfish that we cannot bear the thought of losing the sight of the happiness of a beloved object, and are troubled with a strange jealousy of beings unknown to us, and for ever to be unknown, about to be taken into the very heart, perhaps, of the friend from whom we are parting, and to whom in that fear we give almost a sullen farewell? Or does the shadow of death pass over us while we stand for the last time together on the sea-shore, and see the ship with all her sails about to voyage away to the uttermost parts of the earth? Or do we shudder at the thought of mutability in all created things—and know that ere a few suns shall have brightened the path of the swift vessel on the sea, we shall be dimly remembered—at last forgotten—and all those days, months, and years that once seemed eternal, swallowed up in everlasting oblivion?

With us all ambitious desires some years ago expired. Far rather would we read than write nowadays—far rather than read, sit with shut eyes and no book in the room—far rather than so sit, walk about alone anywhere

> "Beneath the umbrage deep
> That shades the silent world of memory."

Shall we live? or "like beasts and common people die?" There is something harsh and grating in the collocation of these words of the "Melancholy Cowley;" yet he meant no harm, for he was a kind, good creature as ever was born, and a true genius. He there has expressed concisely, but too abruptly, the mere fact of their falling alike and together into oblivion. Far better Gray's exquisite words,

"On some fond breast the parting soul relies!"

The reliance is firm and sure; the "fond breast" is faithful to its trust, and dying, transmits it to another; till after two or three transmissions—holy all, but fainter and dimmer—the pious tradition dies, and all memorial of the love and the delight, the pity and the sorrow, is swallowed up in vacant night.

Posthumous Fame! Proud words—yet may they be uttered in a humble spirit. The common lot of man is, after death—oblivion. Yet genius, however small its sphere, if conversant with the conditions of the human heart, may vivify with indestructible life some happy delineations, that shall continue to be held dear by successive sorrowers in this vale of tears. If the *name* of the delineator continue to have something sacred in its sound—obscure to the many as it may be, or non-existent—the hope of such posthumous fame is sufficient to one who overrates not his own endowments. And as the hope has its root in love and sympathy, he who by his writings has inspired towards himself when in life, some of these feelings in the hearts of not a few who never saw his face, seems to be justified in believing that even after final obliteration of *Hic jacet* from his tombstone, his memory will be regarded with something of the same affection in his REMAINS.

REMARKS

ON THE

SCENERY OF THE HIGHLANDS.

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[Professor Wilson's "Remarks on the Scenery of the Highlands" were first published as a Preface to *Swan's Select Views of the Lakes of Scotland*, 2d edition, 1836. They were not included originally in the "Recreations of Christopher North;" but the harmony of their tone and spirit seemed to recommend them as an appropriate sequel to that work; and accordingly they are now reprinted as such. The thanks of the Editor and Publishers of Professor Wilson's writings are due to the Messrs Fullarton, the proprietors of "Swan's Views," for the liberal manner in which they have placed this valuable article at their disposal.]

In no other country does nature exhibit herself in more various forms of beauty and sublimity, than in the North of England and the Highlands of Scotland. This is acknowledged by all who, having studied their character, and become familiar with the feelings it inspires, have compared the effects produced on their minds by our own mountainous regions, with what they have experienced among the scenery of the Alps. There, indeed, all objects are on so vast a scale, that we are for a while astonished as we gaze on the gigantic; and all other emotions are sunk in an overwhelming sense of awe that prostrates the imagination. But on recovering from its subjection to the prodigious, that faculty everywhere recognises in those mighty mountains of dark forests, glittering glaciers, and regions of eternal snow—infinite all—the power and dominion

of the Sublime. True that all these are but materials for the mind to work on, and that to its creative energy nature owes much of that grandeur which seems to be inherent in her own forms; yet surely she in herself is great, and there is a regality belonging of divine right to such a monarch as Mont Blanc.

Those are the very regions of sublimity, and if brought into immediate comparison with them in their immense magnitude, the most magnificent scenery of our own country would no doubt seem to lose its character of greatness. But such is not the process of the imagination in her intercourse with Nature. To her sufficient for the day is the good thereof; and on each new glorious sight being shown to her eyes, she employs her God-given power to magnify or irradiate what she beholds, without diminishing or obscuring what she remembers. Thus, to her all things in nature hold their own due place, and retain for ever their own due impressions, aggrandised and beautified by mutual reaction in those visionary worlds, which by a thought she can create, and which as they arise are all shadowy representations of realities—new compositions in which the image of the earth we tread is reflected fairer or greater than any realities, but not therefore less, but more true to the spirit of nature. It is thus that Poets and Painters at once obey and control their own inspirations. They visit all the regions of the earth, but to love, admire, and adore; and the greatest of them all, native to our soil, from their travel or sojourn in foreign lands, have always brought home a clearer insight into the character of the scenery of their own, a profounder affection for it all, and a higher power of imaging its attributes in colours or in words. In our poetry, more than in any other, nature sees herself reflected in a magic mirror; and though many a various show passes processionally along its lustre, displaying the scenery of "lands and seas, whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms," among them all there are none more delightful or elevating to behold, than those which genius, inspired by love, has framed of the imagery, which in all her pomp and prodigality heaven has been pleased to shower, through all seasons, on our own beautiful island. It is not for us to say whether our native Painters, or the "old masters," have shown the greatest genius in landscape; but if the palm must be yielded to them whose works have been consecrated by a reverence, as often, perhaps, superstitious as

religious, we do not fear to say that their superiority is not to be attributed in any degree to the scenery on which they exercised the art its beauty had inspired. Whatever may be the associations connected with the subjects of their landscapes—and we know not why they should be higher or holier than those belonging to innumerable places in our own land—assuredly in themselves they are not more interesting or impressive; nay, though none who have shared with us the spirit of the few imperfect sentences we have now written, will, for a moment, suppose us capable of instituting an invidious comparison between our own scenery and that of any other country, why should we hesitate to assert that our own storm-loving Northern Isle is equally rich in all kinds of beauty as the sunny South, and richer far in all kinds of grandeur, whether we regard the forms or colouring of nature—earth, sea, or air,—

"Or all the dread magnificence of heaven."

What other region in all the world like that of the Lakes in the North of England! And yet how the true lover of nature, while he carries along with him its delightful character in his heart, and can so revive any spot of especial beauty in his imagination, as that it shall seem in an instant to be again before his very eyes, can deliver himself up, after the lapse of a day, to the genius of some savage scene in the Highlands of Scotland, rent and riven by the fury of some wild sea-loch! Not that the regions do not resemble one another, but surely the prevailing spirit of the one—not so of the other—is a spirit of joy and of peace. Her mountains, invested, though they often be, in gloom—and we have been more than once benighted during day, as a thunder-cloud thickened the shadows that for ever sleep in the deepest dungeons of Helvellyn—are yet—so it seems to us—such mountains as in nature ought to belong to "merry England." They boldly meet the storms, and seen in storms, you might think they loved the trouble; but pitch your tent among them, and you will feel that theirs is a grandeur that is congenial with the sunshine, and that their spirit fully rejoices in the brightness of light. In clear weather, verdant from base to summit, how majestic their repose! And as mists slowly withdraw themselves in thickening folds up along their sides, the revelation made is still of

more and more of the beautiful—arable fields below—then coppice woods studded with standard trees—enclosed pastures above and among the woods—broad breasts of close-nibbled herbage here and there adorned by rich dyed rocks, that do not break the expanse—till the whole veil has disappeared, and, lo! the long lofty range, with its wavy line, rising and sinking so softly in the blue serenity perhaps of an almost cloudless sky. Yet though we have thus characterised the mountains by what we have always felt to be the pervading spirit of the region, chasms and ravines, and cliffs and precipices, are there; in some places you see such assemblages as inspire the fear that quakes at the heart, when suddenly struck in the solitude with a sense of the sublime; and though we have called the mountains green—and during Spring and Summer, in spite of frost or drought, they are green as emerald—yet in Autumn they are many-coloured, and are girdled with a glow of variegated light, that at sunset sometimes seems like fire kindled in the woods.

The larger Vales are all serene and cheerful, and among the sylvan knolls with which their wide levels highly cultivated are interspersed, cottages, single or in groups, are frequent, of an architecture always admirably suited to the scenery, because in a style suggested not by taste or fancy, which so often disfigure nature to produce the picturesque, but resorted to for sake of the uses and conveniences of in-door life, to weather-fend it in storms, and in calm to give it the enjoyment of sunshine. Many of these dwellings are not what are properly called cottages, but Statesmen's houses, of ample front, with their many roofs, overshadowed by a stately grove, and inhabited by the same race for many generations. All alike have their suitable gardens, and the porches of the poorest are often clustered with roses; for everywhere among these hills, even in minds the most rude and uncultivated, there is a natural love of flowers. The villages, though somewhat too much modernised in those days of improvement, and indeed not a few of them with hardly any remains now of their original architecture—nothing old about them but the church tower, perhaps the parsonage—are nevertheless generally of a pleasing character, and accordant, if not with the great features of nature, which are unchanged and unchangeable, with the increased cultivation of the country, and the many villas and

ornamented cottages that have risen and are rising by every lake and river side. Rivers indeed, properly so called, there are none among these mountains; but every vale, great and small, has at all times its pure and undefiled stream or rivulet; every hill has its hundreds of evanescent rills, almost every one its own perennial torrent flowing from spring, marsh, or tarn; and the whole region is often alive with waterfalls, of many of which, in its exquisite loveliness, the scenery is fit for fairy festivals—and of many, in its horrid gloom, for gatherings of gnomes revisiting the glimpses of the moon from their subterraneous prisons. One lake there is which has been called "wooded Winandermere, the river lake;" and there is another—Ulswater—which you might imagine to be a river too, and to have come flowing from afar: the one excelling in isles, and bays, and promontories, serene and gentle all, and perfectly beautiful; the other, matchless in its majesty of cliff and mountain, and in its old forests, among whose hoary gloom is for ever breaking out the green light of young generations, and perpetual renovation triumphing over perpetual decay. Of the other lakes—not river-like—the character may be imagined even from that we have faintly described of the mountains:—almost every vale has its lake, or a series of lakes—and though some of them have at times a stern aspect, and have scenes to show almost of desolation, descending sheer to the water's edge, or overhanging the depth that looks profounder in the gloom, yet even these, to eyes and hearts familiar with their spirit, wear a sweet smile which seldom passes away: witness Wastwater—with its huge single mountains, and hugest of all the mountains of England, Scawfell, with its terrific precipices—which, in the accidents of storm, gloom, or mist, has seemed, to the lonely passer-by, savage in the extreme—a howling or dreary wilderness—but in its enduring character, is surrounded with all quiet pastoral imagery, the deep glen in which it is imbedded being, in good truth, the abode of Sabbath peace. That hugest mountain is indeed the centre from which all the vales irregularly diverge; the whole circumjacent region may be traversed in a week; and though no other district of equal extent contains such variety of the sublime and beautiful, yet the beautiful is so prevalent, that we feel its presence, even in places where it is overpowered; and on leaving "The Lakes," our imagina-

tion is haunted and possessed with images, not of dread, but of delight.

We have sometimes been asked, whether the North of England or the Highlands of Scotland should be visited first; but, simple as the question seems, it is really one which it is impossible to answer; though we suspect it would equally puzzle Scotchman or Englishman to give a sufficient reason for his wishing to see any part of any other country before he had seen what was best worth seeing in his own. His own country ought to be, and generally is, dearest to every man. There, if nothing forbid, he should not only begin his study of nature, but continue his education in her school, wherever it may happen to be situated, till he has taken his first degree. We believe that the love of nature is strong in the hearts of the inhabitants of our Island. And how wide and profound may that knowledge of nature be, which the loving heart has acquired, without having studied her anywhere but within the Four Seas! The impulses that make us desire to widen the circle of our observation, are all impulses of delight and love; and it would be strange indeed, did they not move us, first of all, towards whatever is most beautiful belonging to our own land. Were it otherwise, it would seem as if the heart were faithless to the home-affections, out of which, in their strength, spring all others that are good; and it is essential, we do not doubt, to the full growth of the Love of Country, that we should all have our earliest imaginative delights associated with our native soil. Such associations will for ever keep it loveliest to our eyes; nor is it possible that we can ever as perfectly understand the character of any other; but we can afterwards transfer and transfuse our feelings in imagination kindled by our own will; and the beauty, born before our eyes, among the banks and braes of our childhood, and then believed to be but there, and nothing like it anywhere else in all the world, becomes a golden light, "whose home is everywhere," which if we do not darken it, will shine unshadowed in the dreariest places, till "the desert blossom like the rose."

For our own parts, before we beheld one of "the beautiful fields of England," we had walked all Scotland thorough, and had seen many a secret place, which now, in the confusion of our crowded memory, seem often to shift their uncertain

ground; but still, wherever they glimmeringly reappear, invested with the same heavenly light in which, long ago, they took possession of our soul. And now, that we are almost as familiar with the fair sister-land, and love her almost as well as Scotland's self, not all the charms in which she is arrayed, and they are at once graceful and glorious, have ever for a day withdrawn our deeper dreams from the regions where,

"In life's morning march, when our spirit was young,"

unaccompanied but by our own shadow in the wilderness, we first heard the belling of the red-deer and the eagle's cry.

In those days there was some difficulty, if not a little danger, in getting in among some of the noblest regions of our Alps. They could not be traversed without strong personal exertion; and a solitary pedestrian excursion through the Grampians was seldom achieved without a few incidents that might almost have been called adventures. It is very different now; yet the *Genius Loci*, though tamed, is not subdued; and they who would become acquainted with the heart of the Highlands, will have need of some endurance still, and must care nothing about the condition of earth or sky. Formerly, it was not possible to survey more than a district or division in a single season, except to those unenviable persons who had no other pursuit but that of amusement, and waged a weary war with time. The industrious dwellers in cities, who sought those solitudes, for a while to relieve their hearts from worldly anxieties, and gratify that love of nature which is inextinguishable in every bosom that in youth has beat with its noble inspirations, were contented with a week or two of such intercommunion with the spirit of the mountains, and thus continued to extend their aquaintance with the glorious wildernesses, visit after visit, for years. Now the whole Highlands, western and northern, may be commanded in a month. Not that any one who knows what they are, will imagine that they can be exhausted in a lifetime. The man does not live who knows all worth knowing there; and were they who made the Trigonometrical Survey to be questioned on their experiences, they would be found ignorant of thousands of sights, any one of which would be worth a journey for its own sake. But now steam has bridged the Great Glen,

and connected the two seas. Salt-water lochs the most remote and inaccessible, it has brought within reach of a summer-day's voyage. In a week a joyous company can gather all the mainland shores, leaving not one magnificent bay uncircled; and, having rounded St Kilda and

> "the Hebride Isles,
> Placed far amid the melancholy main,"

and heard the pealing anthem of waves in the cave-cathedral of Staffa, may bless the bells of St Mungo's tolling on the first Sabbath. Thousands and tens of thousands, who, but for those smoking sea-horses, had never been beyond view of the city spires, have seen sights which, though passing by almost like dreams, are not like dreams forgotten, but revive of themselves in memory and imagination; and, when the heart is weary with the work of the hand, quicken its pulses with a sudden pleasure that is felt like a renovation of youth.

All through the interior, too, how many hundreds of miles of roads now intersect regions not long ago deemed impracticable!—firm on the fen, in safety flung across the chasm—and winding smoothly amidst shatterings of rocks, round the huge mountain bases, and down the glens once felt as if interminable, now travelled almost with the speed of the raven's wing!

In the Highlands now, there is no *Terra Incognita*. But there are many places yet well worth seeing, which it is not easy for all men to find, and to which every man must be his own guide. It is somewhat of a selfish feeling, indeed, but the pride is not a mean one, with which the solitary pedestrian sits down to contemplate some strange, or wild, or savage scene, or some view of surpassing sweetness and serenity, so far removed from the track of men that he can well believe for a time that his eyes have been the first to behold it, and that for them alone it has now become a visible revelation. The memory of such places is sometimes kept as a secret which we would not communicate but to a congenial friend. They are hallowed by those mysterious "thoughts that, like phantoms, trackless come and go;" no words can tell another how to find his way thither; and were we ourselves to seek to return, we should have to trust to some consciousness

mysterious as the instinct of a bird that carries it through the blind night to the place of its desire.

It is well to have in our mind the conception of a route: but without being utterly departed from—nay, without ceasing to control us within certain bounds—it admits of almost any degrees of deviation. We have known persons apparently travelling for pleasure, who were afraid to turn a few miles to the right or the left, for fear of subjecting themselves to the reproach of their own conscience for infirmity of purpose. They had "chalked out a route," and acted as if they had sworn a solemn oath to follow it. This is to be a slave among the boundless dominions of nature, where all are free. As the wind bloweth wherever it listeth, so move the moods of men's minds, when there is nought to shackle them, and when the burden of their cares has been dropt, that for a while they may walk on air, and feel that they too have wings.

> "A voice calls on me from the mountain depths,
> And it must be obeyed."

The voice was our own—and yet though but a whisper from the heart, it seemed to come from the front of yon distant precipice—sweet and wild as an echo.

On rising at dawn in the shieling, why think, much less determine, where at night we are to lay down our head? Let this be our thought:

> "Among the hills a hundred homes have I;
> My table in the wilderness is spread;
> In these lone spots one honest smile can buy
> Plain fare, warm welcome, and a rushy bed."

If we obey any powers external to our own minds, let them be the powers of Nature—the rains, the winds, the atmosphere, sun moon, and stars. We must keep a look-out—

> "To see the deep fermenting tempest brew'd,
> In the grim evening sky;"

that next day we may cross the red rivers by bridges, not by fords; and if they roll along unbridged, that we may set our face to the mountain, and wind our way round his shoulder by sheep-tracks, unwet with the heather, till we behold some great strath, which we had not visited but for that storm,

with its dark blue river streaked with golden light,—for its source is in a loch among the Eastern Range; and there, during the silent hours, heather, bracken, and greensward rejoiced in the trembling dews.

There is no such climate for all kinds of beauty and grandeur, as the climate of the Highlands. Here and there you meet with an old shepherd or herdsman, who has beguiled himself into a belief, in spite of many a night's unforeseen imprisonment in the mists, that he can presage its changes from fair to foul, and can tell the hour when the long-threatening thunder will begin to mutter. The weather-wise have often perished in their plaids. Yet among a thousand uncertain symptoms, there are a few certain, which the ranger will do well to study, and he will often exult on the mountain to feel that "knowledge is power." Many a glorious hour has been won from the tempest by him before whose instructed eye—beyond the gloom that wide around blackened all the purple heather —"far off its coming shone." Leagues of continuous magnificence have gradually unveiled themselves on either side to him, as he has slowly paced, midway between, along the banks of the River of Waterfalls; having been assured by the light struggling through the mist, that it would not be long till there was a break-up of all that ghastly dreariment, and that the sun would call on him to come forth from his cave of shelter, and behold in all its pride the Glen affronting the sea.

Some Tourists—as they call themselves—are provided with map and compass; and we hope they find them of avail in extremities, though we fear few such understand their use. No map can tell—except very vaguely—how the aspect of the localities, looked at on its lines, is likely to be affected by sun-rise, meridian, or sun-set. Yet, true it is, that every region has its own happy hours, which the fortunate often find unawares, and know them at once to be so the moment they lift up their eyes. At such times, while "our hearts rejoice in Nature's joy," we feel the presence of a spirit that brings out the essential character of the place, be it of beauty or of grandeur. Harmonious as music is then the composition of colours and of forms. It becomes a perfect picture in memory, more and more idealised by imagination, every moment the veil is withdrawn before it; its aerial lineaments never fade; yet they too, though their being be but in the soul, are mel-

lowed by the touch of time—and every glimpse of such a vision, the longer we live, and the more we suffer, seems suffused with a mournful light, as if seen through tears.

It would serve no good purpose, supposing we had the power, to analyse the composition of that scenery, which in the aggregate so moves even the most sluggish faculties, as to make "the dullest wight a poet." It rises before the mind in imagination, as it does before the eyes in nature; and we can no more speak of it than look at it, but—as a whole. We can indeed fix our mental or our visual gaze on scene after scene to the exclusion of all beside, and picture it even in words that shall be more than shadows. But how shall any succession of such pictures, however clear and complete, give an idea of that picture which comprehends them all, and infinite as are its manifestations, nevertheless is imbued with one spirit?

Try to forget that in the Highlands there are any Lochs. Then the sole power is that of the Mountains. We speak of a sea of mountains; but that image has never more than momentary possession of us, because, but for a moment, in nature it has no truth. Tumultuary movements envelope them; but they themselves are for ever steadfast and for ever still. Their power is that of an enduring calm no storms can disturb—and is often felt to be more majestical, the more furious are the storms. As the tempest-driven clouds are frantickly hurrying to and fro, how serene the summits in the sky! Or if they be hidden, how peaceful the glimpses of some great mountain's breast! They disregard the hurricane that goes crashing through their old woods; the cloud-thunder disturbs not them any more than that of their own cataracts, and the lightnings play for their pastime. All minds under any excitation, more or less personify mountains. When much moved, that natural process affects all our feelings, as the language of passion awakened by such objects vividly declares; and then we do assuredly conceive of mountains as endued with life—however dim and vague the conception may be—and feel their character in their very names. Utterly strip our ideas of them of all that is attached to them as impersonations, and their power is gone. But while we are creatures of imagination as well as of reason, will those monarchs remain invested with the purple and seated on thrones.

In such imaginative moods as these must every one be, far more frequently than he is conscious of, and in far higher degrees, who, with a cultivated mind and a heart open to the influences of nature, finds himself, it matters not whether for the first or the hundredth time, in the Highlands. We fancy the Neophyte wandering, all by himself, on the "Longest Day;" rejoicing to think that the light will not fail him, when at last the sun must go down, for that a starry gloaming will continue its gentle reign till morn. He thinks but of what he sees, and that is—the mountains. All memories of any other world but that which encloses him with its still sublimities, are not excluded merely, but obliterated: his whole being is there! And now he stands on table-land, and with his eyes sweeps the horizon, bewildered for a while, for it seems chaos all. But soon the mighty masses begin arranging themselves into order; the confusion insensibly subsides as he comprehends more and more of their magnificent combinations; he discovers centres round which are associated altitudes towering afar off; and finally, he feels, and blesses himself on his felicity, that his good genius has placed him on the very centre of those wondrous assemblages altogether, from which alone he could command an empire of realities, more glorious far than was ever empire of dreams.

It is a cloudy, but not a stormy day; the clouds occupy but portions of the sky,—and are they all in slow motion together, or are they all at rest? Huge shadows stalking along the earth, tell that there are changes going on in heaven; but to the upward gaze, all seems hanging there in the same repose; and with the same soft illumination the sun to continue shining, a concentration rather than an orb of light. All above is beautiful, and the clouds themselves are like celestial mountains; but the eye forsakes them, though it sees them still, and more quietly now it moves along the pageantry below that endures for ever—till chained on a sudden by that range of cliffs. 'Tis along them that the giant shadows are stalking—but now they have passed by—and the long line of precipice seems to come forward in the light. To look down from the brink might be terrible—to look up from the base would be sublime—but fronting the eye thus, horrid though it be, the sight is most beautiful; for weather-stains, and mosses, and lichens, and flowering plants—conspicuous most

the broom and the heather—and shrubs that, among their leaves of light, have no need of flowers—and hollies, and birks, and hazels, and many a slender tree beside with pensile tresses, besprinkle all the cliffs, that in no gloom could ever lose their lustre; but now the day though not bright is fair, and brings out the whole beauty of the precipice—call it the hanging garden of the wilderness.

The Highlands have been said to be a gloomy region, and worse gloom than theirs might well be borne, if not unfrequently illumined with such sights as these; but that is not the character of the mountains, though the purple light in which, for usual, they are so richly steeped, is often for a season tamed, or for a short while extinguished, while a strange night-like day lets fall over them all a something like a shroud. Such days we have seen—but now in fancy we are with the pilgrim, and see preparation making for a sunset. It is drawing towards evening, and the clouds that have all this time been moving, though we knew it not, have assuredly settled now, and taken up their rest. The sun has gone down, and all that unspeakable glory has left the sky. Evening has come and gone without our knowing that she had been here; but there is no gloom on any place in the whole of this vast wilderness, and the mountains, as they wax dimmer and dimmer, look as if they were surrendering themselves to a repose like sleep. Day had no voice here audible to human ear—but night is murmuring—and gentle though the murmur be, it filleth the great void, and we imagine that ever and anon it awakens echoes. And now it is darker than we thought, for lo! one soft-burning star! And we see that there are many stars; but not theirs the light that begins again to reveal object after object as gradually as they had disappeared; the moon is about to rise—is rising—has arisen—has taken her place high in heaven; and as the glorious world again expands around us, faintly tinged, clearly illumined, softly shadowed, and deeply begloomed, we say within our hearts,

"How beautiful is night!"

There are many such table-lands as the one we have now been imagining, and it requires but a slight acquaintance with the country to conjecture rightly where they lie. Inde-

pendently of the panoramas they display, they are in themselves always impressive; perhaps a bare level that shows but bleached bent, and scatterings of stones, with here and there an unaccountable rock; or hundreds of fairy greensward knolls, fringed with tiny forests of fern that have almost displaced the heather; or a wild withered moor or moss intersected with pits dug not by men's hands; and, strange to see! a huge log lying half exposed, and as if blackened by fire. High as such places are, on one of them a young gorcock was stricken down by a hawk close to our feet. Indeed, hawks seem to haunt such places, and we have rarely crossed one of them, without either seeing the creature's stealthy flight, or hearing, whether he be alarmed or preying, his ever-angry cry.

From a few such stations, you get an insight into the configuration of the whole Western Highlands. By the dip of the mountains, you discover at a glance all the openings in the panorama around you into other regions. Follow your fancies fearlessly wherever they may lead; and if the blue aerial haze that hangs over a pass winding eastward, tempt you from your line of march due north, forthwith descend in that direction, and haply an omen will confirm you—an eagle rising on the left, and sailing away before you into that very spot of sky.

No man, however well read, should travel by book. In books you find descriptions, and often good ones, of the most celebrated scenes, but seldom a word about the vast tracts between; and it would seem as if many Tourists had used their eyes only in those places where they had been told by common fame there was something greatly to admire. Travel in the faith, that go where you will, the cravings of your heart will be satisfied, and you will find it so, if you be a true lover of nature. You hope to be inspired by her spirit, that you may may read aright her works. But such inspiration comes not from one object or another, however great or fair, but from the whole "mighty world of eye and ear," and it must be supported continuously, or it perishes. You may see a thousand sights never before seen by human eye, at every step you take, wherever be your path; for no steps but yours have ever walked along that same level; and moreover, never on the same spot twice rested the same lights or

shadows. Then there may be something in the air, and more in your own heart, that invests every ordinary object with extraordinary beauty; old images affect you with a new delight; a grandeur grows upon your eyes in the undulations of the simplest hills; and you feel there is sublimity in the common skies. It is thus that all the stores of imagery are insensibly gathered, with which the minds of men are filled, who from youth have communed with nature. And it is thus that all those feelings have flowed into their hearts by which that imagery is sanctified; and these are the Poets.

It is in this way that we become familiar with the mountains. Far more than we were aware of have we trusted to the strong spirit of delight within us, to prompt and to guide. And in such a country as the Highlands, thus led, we cannot err. Therefore, if your desire be for the summits, set your face thitherwards, and wind a way of your own, still ascending and ascending, along some vast brow, that seems almost a whole day's journey, and where it is lost from your sight, not to end, but to go sweeping round, with undiminished grandeur into another region. You are not yet half-way up the mountain, but you care not for the summit now; for you find yourself among a number of green knolls—all of them sprinkled, and some of them crowned with trees—as large almost as our lowland hills—surrounded close to the brink with the purple heather—and without impairing the majesty of the immense expanse, imbuing it with pastoral and sylvan beauty;—and there, lying in a small forest glade of the lady-fern, ambitious no longer of a throne on Benlomond or Bennevis, you dream away the still hours till sunset, yet then have no reason to weep that you have lost a day.

But the best way to view the mountains is to trace the Glens. To find out the glens you must often scale the shoulders of mountains, and in such journeys of discovery, you have for ever going on before your eyes glorious transfigurations. Sometimes for a whole day one mighty mass lowers before you unchanged; look at it after the interval of hours, and still the giant is one and the same. It rules the region, subjecting all other altitudes to its sway, though many of them range away to a great distance; and at sunset retains its supremacy, blazing almost like a volcano with fiery clouds. Your line of journey lies, perhaps, some two thousand

feet above the level of the sea, and seldom dips down to one thousand; and these are the heights from which all above and all below you looks most magnificent, for both regions have their full power over you—the unscaleable cliffs, the unfathomable abysses—and you know not which is the more sublime. The sublimity indeed is one. It is then that you may do well to ascend to the very mountain-top. For it may happen to be one of those heavenly days indeed, when the whole Highlands seem to be reposing in the cloudless sky.

But we were about to speak of the Glens. And some of them are best entered by such descents as these—perhaps at their very head—where all at once you are in another world, how still, how gloomy, how profound! An hour ago and the eye of the eagle had not wider command of earth, sea, and sky, than yours—almost blinded now by the superincumbent precipices that imprison you, and seem to shut you out from life.

> "Such the grim desolation, where Ben-Hun
> And Craig-na-Torr, by earthquake shatterings
> Disjoined with horrid chasms prerupt, enclose
> What superstition calls the Glen of Ghosts."

Or you may enter some great glen from the foot, where it widens into vale or strath—and there are many such—and some into which you can sail up an arm of the sea. For a while it partakes of the cultivated beauty of the lowlands, and glen and vale seem almost one and the same; but gradually it undergoes a strange wild change of character, and in a few miles that similitude is lost. There is little or no arable ground here; but the pasture is rich on the unenclosed plain —and here and there are enclosures, near the few houses or huts standing, some of them in the middle of the glen, quite exposed, on eminences above reach of the floods—some more happily placed on the edge of the coppices, that sprinkle the steep sides of the hills, yet barely mountains. But mountains they soon become; and leaving behind you those few barren habitations, you see before you a wide black moor. Beautiful hitherto had been the river, for a river you had inclined to think it, long after it had narrowed into a stream, with many a waterfall, and in one chasm a cataract. But the torrent now has a wild mountain cry, and though there is still beauty on its banks, they are bare of all trees, now swelling into

multitudes of low green knolls among the heather, now composed but of heather and rocks. Through the very middle of the black moor it flows, yet are its waters clear, for all is not moss, and it seems to wind its way where there is nothing to pollute its purity, or tame its lustre. 'Tis a solitary scene, but still sweet; the mountains are of great magnitude, but they are not precipitous; vast herds of cattle are browsing there, on heights from which fire has cleared the heather, and wide ranges of greensward upon the lofty gloom seem to lie in perpetual light.

The moor is crossed, and you prepare to scale the mountain in front, for you imagine the torrent by your side flows from a tarn in yonder cove, and forms that series of waterfalls. You have been all along well pleased with the glen, and here at the head, though there is a want of cliffs of the highest class, you feel nevertheless that it has a character of grandeur. Looking westward, you are astounded to see them ranging away on either side of another reach of the glen, terrific in their height, but in their formation beautiful, for like the walls of some vast temple they stand, roofed with sky. Yet are they but as a portal or gateway of the glen. For entering in with awe, that deepens, as you advance, almost into dread, you behold, beyond, mountains that carry their cliffs up into the clouds, seamed with chasms, and hollowed out into coves, where night dwells visibly by the side of day; and still the glen seems winding on beneath a purple light, that almost looks like gloom; such vast forms and such prodigious colours, and such utter stillness, become oppressive to your very life, and you wish that some human being were by, to relieve, by his mere presence, the insupportable weight of such a solitude.

But we should never have done were we to attempt to sketch, however slightly, the character of all the different kinds of glens. Some are sublime in their prodigious depth and vast extent, and would be felt to be so, even were the mountains that enclose them of no great majesty; but these are all of the highest order, and sometimes are seen from below to the very cairns on their summits. Now we walk along a reach, between astonishing ranges of cliffs, among large heaps of rocks—not a tree—scarcely a shrub—no herbage—the very heather blasted—all lifelessness and desolation. The glen gradually grows less and less horrid, and

though its sides are seamed with clefts and chasms, in the gloom there are places for the sunshine, and there is felt to be even beauty in the repose. Descends suddenly on either side a steep slope of hanging wood, and we find ourselves among verdant mounds, and knolls, and waterfalls. We come then into what seems of old to have been a forest. Here and there a stately pine survives, but the rest are all skeletons; and now the glen widens, and widens, yet ceases not to be profound, for several high mountains enclose a plain on which armies might encamp, and castellated clouds hang round the heights of the glorious amphitheatre, while the sky-roof is clear, and as if in its centre, the refulgent sun. 'Tis the plain called "The Meeting of the Glens." From the east and the west, the north and the south, they come like rivers into the sea.

Other glens there are, as long, but not so profound, nor so grandly composed; yet they too conduct us nobly in among the mountains, and up their sides, and on even to their very summits. Such are the glens of Atholl, in the neighbourhood of Ben-y-gloe. From them the heather is not wholly banished, and the fire has left a green light without quenching the purple colour native to the hills. We think that we almost remember the time when those glens were in many places sprinkled with huts, and all animated with human life. Now they are solitary; and you may walk from sunrise till sunset without seeing a single soul. For a hundred thousand acres have there been changed into a forest, for sake of the pastime, indeed, which was dear of old to chieftains and kings. Vast herds of red-deer are there, for they herd in thousands—yet may you wander for days over the boundless waste, nor once be startled by one stag bounding by. Yet may a herd, a thousand strong, be drawn up, as in battle array, on the cliffs above your head. For they will long stand motionless, at gaze, when danger is in the wind—and then their antlers to unpractised eyes seem but boughs grotesque, or are invisible; and when all at once, with one accord, at signal from the stag, whom they obey, they wheel off towards the Corries, you think it but thunder, and look up to the clouds. Fortunate if you see such a sight once in your life. Once only have we seen it; and it was, of a sudden, all by ourselves,

"Ere yet the hunter's startling horn was heard
Upon the golden hills."

Almost within rifle-shot, the herd occupied a position, high up indeed, but below several ridges of rocks, running parallel for a long distance, with slopes between of sward and heather. Standing still, they seemed to extend about a quarter of a mile, and as with a loud clattering of hoofs and antlers, they took more open order, the line at least doubled its length, and the whole mountain-side seemed alive. They might not be going at full speed, but the pace was equal to that of any charge of cavalry; and once and again the flight passed before us, till it overcame the ridges, and then deploying round the shoulder of the mountain, disappeared, without dust or noise, into the blue light of another glen.

We question, if there be in the Highlands any one glen comparable with Borrowdale in Cumberland. But there are several that approach it, in that combination of beauty and grandeur, which perhaps no other scene equals in all the world. The "Gorge" of that Dale exhibits the finest imaginable assemblage of rocks and rocky hills, all wildly wooded; beyond them, yet before we have entered into the Dale, the Pass widens, with noble cliffs on one side, and on the other a sylvan stream, not without its abysses; and we see before us some lovely hills, on which—

"The smiling power of cultivation lies,"

yet leaves, with lines defined by the steeps that defy the ploughshare, copses and groves; and thus we are brought into the Dale itself, and soon have a vision of the whole—green and golden fields—for though most are in pasture, almost all seem arable—sprinkled with fine single trees—and lying in flats and levels, or swelling into mounds and knolls, and all diversified with every kind of woods; single cottages, with their out-buildings, standing everywhere they should stand, and coloured like the rocks from which in some lights they are hardly to be distinguished—strong-roofed and undilapidated, though many of them very old; villages, apart from one another a mile—and there are three—yet on their sites, distant and different in much though they be, all associated together by the same spirit of beauty that pervades all

the Dale. Half way up, and in some places more, the enclosing hills and even mountains are sylvan indeed, and though there be a few inoffensive aliens, they are all adorned with their native trees. The mountains are not so high as in our Highlands, but they are very majestic; and the Passes over into Langdale, and Wastdalehead, and Buttermere, are magnificent, and show precipices in which the Golden Eagle himself might rejoice.

No—there is no glen in all the Highlands comparable with Borrowdale. Yet we know of some that are felt to be kindred places, and their beauty though less, almost as much affects us, because though contending, as it were, with the darker spirit of the mountain, it is not overcome, but prevails; and their beauty will increase with years. For while the rocks continue to frown aloft for ever, and the cliffs to range along the corries, unbroken by trees, which there the tempest will not suffer to rise, the woods and groves below, preserved from the axe, for sake of their needful shelter, shall become statelier, till the birch equal the pine; reclaimed from the waste, shall many a fresh field recline among the heather, tempering the gloom; and houses arise where now there are but huts, and every house have its garden :—such changes are now going on, and we have been glad to observe their progress, even though sometimes they had removed, or were removing, objects dear from old associations, and which, had it been possible, but it was not, we should have loved to see preserved.

And one word on those sweet pastoral seclusions into which one often drops unexpectedly, it may be at the close of day, and finds a night's lodging in the only hut. Yet they lie, sometimes, embosomed in their own green hills, among the most rugged mountains, and even among the wildest moors. They have no features by which you can describe them; it is their serenity that charms you, and their cheerful peace; perhaps it is wrong to call them glens, and they are but dells. Yet one thinks of a dell as deep, however small it may be; but these are not deep, for the hills slope down gently upon them, and leave room perhaps between for a little shallow loch. Often they have not any visible water at all, only a few springs and rivulets, and you wonder to see them so very green; there is no herbage like theirs; and to such spots of old, and sometimes

yet, the kine are led in summer, and there the lonely family live in their shieling till the harvest moon.

We have all along used the same word, and called the places we have spoken of—glens. A fine observer—the Editor of Gilpin's Forest Scenery—has said: "The gradation from extreme width downwards should be thus arranged,—strath, vale, dale, valley, glen, dell, ravine, chasm. In the strath, vale, and dale, we may expect to find the large, majestic, gently flowing river, or even the deeper or smaller lake. In the glen, if the river be large, it flows more rapidly, and with greater variety. In the dell the stream is smaller. In the ravine, we find the mountain torrent and the waterfall. In the chasm, we find the roaring cataract, or the rill, bursting from its haunted fountain. The chasm discharges its small tribute into the ravine, while the ravine is tributary to the dell, and thence to the glen; and the glen to the dale."

These distinctions are admirably expressed, and perfectly true to nature; yet we doubt if it would be possible to preserve them in describing a country, and assuredly they are very often indeed confused by common use in the naming of places. We have said nothing about Straths—nor shall we try to describe one—but suggest to your own imagination—as specimens—Strath-Spey, Strath-Tay, Strath-Earn. The dominion claimed by each of those rivers, within the mountain ranges that environ their courses, is a strath; and three noble straths they are, from source to sea.

And now we are brought to speak of the Highland Rivers, Streams, and Torrents; but we shall let them rush or flow, murmur or thunder in your own ears, for you cannot fail to imagine what the waters must be in a land of such glens and such mountains. The chief rivers possess all the attributes essential to greatness—width—depth—clearness—rapidity—in one word power. And some of them have long courses—rising in the central heights, and winding round many a huge projection, against which in flood we have seen them dashing like the sea. Highland droughts are not of long duration; the supplies are seldom withheld at once by all the tributaries; and one wild night among the mountains converts a calm into a commotion—the many-murmuring voice into one roar. In flood they are terrible to look at; and every whirlpool seems

a place of torment. Winds can make a mighty noise in swinging woods, but there is something to our ears more appalling in that of the fall of waters. Let them be united—and add thunder from the clouds—and we have heard in the Highlands all three in one—and the auditor need not care that he has never stood by Niagara. But when "though not o'erflowing full," a Highland river is in perfection; far better do we love to see and hear him rejoicing than raging; his attributes appear more his own in calm and majestic manifestations, and as he glides or rolls on, without any disturbance, we behold in him an image at once of power and peace.

Of rivers—comparatively speaking—of the second and third order—the Highlands are full—and on some of them the sylvan scenery is beyond compare. No need there to go hunting the waterfalls. Hundreds of them—some tiny indeed, but others tall—are for ever dinning in the woods; yet, at a distance from the cataract, how sweet and quiet is the sound! It hinders you not from listening to the cushat's voice; clear amidst the mellow murmur comes the bleating from the mountain; and all other sound ceases, as you hearken in the sky to the bark of the eagle—rare indeed anywhere, but sometimes to be heard as you thread the "glimmer or the gloom" of the umbrage overhanging the Garry or the Tummel—for he used to build in the cliffs of Ben-Brackie, and if he has shifted his eyrie, a few minutes' waftage will bear him to Cairn-Gower.

In speaking of the glens, we but alluded to the rivers or streams, and some of them, indeed, even the great ones, have but rivulets; while in the greatest, the waters often flow on without a single tree, shadowed but by rocks and clouds. Wade them, and you find they are larger than they seem to be; for looked at along the bottom of those profound hollows, they are but mere slips of sinuous light in the sunshine, and in the gloom you see them not at all. We do not remember any very impressive glen, without a stream, that would not suffer some diminution of its power by our fancying it to have one; we may not be aware, at the time, that the conformation of the glen prevents its having any water-flow, but if we feel its character aright, that want is among the causes of our feeling; just as there are some scenes of which the beauty would not be so touching were there a single tree.

Thousands and tens of thousands there are of nameless perennial torrents, and "in number without number numberless" those that seldom live a week—perhaps not a day. Up among the loftiest regions you hear nothing, even when they are all aflow; yet, there is music in the sight, and the thought of the "general dance and minstrelsy" enlivens the air, where no insect hums. As on your descent you come within hearing of the "liquid lapses," your heart leaps within you, so merrily do they sing; the first torrent-rill you meet with you take for your guide, and it leads you perhaps into some fairy dell, where it wantons awhile in waterfalls, and then gliding along a little dale of its own with "banks o' green bracken," finishes its short course in a stream—one of many that meet and mingle before the current takes the name of river, which in a mile or less becomes a small woodland lake. There are many such of rememberable beauty; living lakes indeed, for they are but pausings of expanded rivers, which again soon pursue their way, and the water-lilies have ever a gentle motion there as if touched by a tide.

It used, not very long ago, to be pretty generally believed by our southern brethren, that there were few trees in the Lowlands of Scotland, and none at all in the Highlands. They had an obscure notion that trees either could not or would not grow in such a soil and climate—cold and bleak enough at times and places, heaven knows—yet not altogether unproductive of diverse stately plants. They know better now; nor were we ever angry with their ignorance, which was nothing more than what was to be expected in persons living perpetually at home so far remote. They rejoice now to visit, and sojourn, and travel here among us, foreigners and a foreign land no more; and we rejoice to see and receive them not as strangers, but friends, and are proud to know they are well pleased to behold our habitation. They do us and our country justice now, and we have sometimes thought even more than justice; for they are lost in admiration of our cities—above all, of Edinburgh—and speak with such raptures of our scenery, that they would appear to prefer it even to their own. They are charmed with our bare green hills, with our shaggy brown mountains they are astonished, our lochs are their delight, our woods their wonder, and they hold up their hands and clap them at our cliffs. This is generous, for we are not

blind to the fact of England being the most beautiful land on all the earth. What are our woods to hers! To hers, what are our single trees! We have no such glorious standards to show as her indomitable and everlasting oaks. She is all over sylvan—Scotland but here and there; look on England from any point in any place, and you see she is rich, from almost any point in any place in Scotland, and you feel that comparatively she is poor. Yet our Lowlands have long been beautifying themselves into a resemblance of hers; as for our Highlands, though many changes have been going on there too, and most we believe for good, they are in their great features, and in their spirit unalterable by art, stamped and inspired by enduring Nature.

We have spoken, slightly, of the sylvan scenery of the Highlands. In Perthshire, especially, it is of rare and extraordinary beauty, and we are always glad to hear of Englishmen travelling up the Tay and the Earn. We desire that eyes familiar with all that is umbrageous should receive their first impressions of our Scottish trees at Duneira and Dunkeld. Nor will those impressions be weakened as they proceed towards Blair Atholl. In that famous Pass, they will feel the power possessed by the sweet wild monotony of the universal birch woods—broken but by grey crags in every shape—grotesque, fantastical, majestic, magnificent, and sublime—on the many-ridged mountains, that are loth to lose the green light of their beloved forests, retain it as long as they can, and on the masses of living lustre seem to look down with pride from their skies.

An English forest, meaning thereby any one wide continuous scene of all kinds of old English trees, with glades of pasture, and it may be of heath between, with dells dipping down into the gloom, and hillocks undulating in the light—ravines and chasms too, rills, and rivulets, and a haunted stream, and not without some melancholy old ruins, and here and there a cheerful cottage that feels not the touch of time—such a forest there is not, and hardly can be imagined to be in Scotland. But in the Highlands, there once were, and are still other forests of quite a different character, and of equal grandeur. In his "Forest Scenery," Gilpin shows that he understood it well; all the knowledge, which as a stranger, almost of necessity he wanted, Lauder has supplied in his

annotations; and the book should now be in the hands of every one who cares about the woods. "The English Forest," says Gilpin, "is commonly composed of woodland views, interspersed with extensive heaths and lawns. Its trees are oak and beech, whose lively green corresponds better than the gloomy pine with the nature of the scene, which seldom assumes the dignity of a mountain one, but generally exhibits a cheerful landscape. It aspires, indeed, to grandeur; but its grandeur does not depend, like that of the Scottish forest, on the sublimity of the objects, but on the vastness of the whole —the extent of its woods and the wideness of its plains. In its inhabitants also the English forest differs from the Scottish; instead of the stag and the roebuck, it is frequented by cattle and fallow-deer, and exchanges the scream of the eagle and the falcon for the crowing of pheasants, and the melody of the nightingale. The Scottish forest, no doubt, is the sublimer scene, and speaks to the imagination in a loftier language than the English forest can reach. The latter, indeed, often rouses the imagination, but seldom in so great a degree, being generally content with captivating the eye. The scenery, too, of the Scottish forest is better calculated to last through ages than that of the English. The woods of both are almost destroyed. But while the English forest hath lost all its beauty with its oaks, and becomes only a desolate waste, the rocks and the mountains, the lakes and the torrents of the Scottish forest make it still an interesting scene."

The Tree of the Highlands is the Pine. There are Scotch firs, indeed, well worth looking at, in the Lowlands, and in England, but to learn their true character you must see them in the glen, among rocks, by the river-side and on the mountain. "We for our parts," says Lauder very finely, "confess that when we have seen it towering in full majesty in the midst of some appropriate Highland scene, and sending its limbs abroad with all the unrestrained freedom of a hardy mountaineer, as if it claimed dominion over the savage region round it, we have looked upon it as a very sublime object. People who have not seen it in its native climate and soil, and who judge of it from the wretched abortions which are swaddled and suffocated in English plantations, among dark, heavy, and eternally wet clays, may well call it a wretched tree; but when its foot is among its own Highland heather, and when it stands freely

in its native knoll of dry gravel, or thinly covered rock, over which its roots wander afar in the wildest reticulation, whilst its tall, furrowed, and often gracefully sweeping red and grey trunk, of enormous circumference, rears aloft its high umbrageous canopy, then would the greatest sceptic on this point be compelled to prostrate his mind before it with a veneration which perhaps was never before excited in him by any other tree." The colour of the pine has been objected to as murky—and murky it often is, or seems to be; and so then is the colour of the heather, and of the river, and of the loch, and of the sky itself thunder-laden, and murkiest of all are the clouds. But a stream of sunshine is let loose, and the gloom is confounded with glory; over all that night-like reign the jocund day goes dancing, and the forest revels in green or in golden light. Thousands and tens of thousands of pines are there, and as you gaze upon the whole mighty array, you fear, lest it might break the spell, to fix your gaze on any one single tree. But there are trees there that will force you to look on themselves alone, and they grow before your eyes into the kings of the forest. Straight stand their stems in the sunshine, and you feel that as straight have they stood in the storm. As yet you look not up, for your heart is awed, and you see but the stately columns reddening away into the gloom. But all the while you feel the power of the umbrage aloft, and when thitherwards you lift your eyes, what a roof to such a cathedral! A cone drops at your feet—nor other sound nor other stir—but afar off you think you hear a cataract. Inaudible your footsteps on the soft yellow floor, composed of the autumnal sheddings of countless years. Then it is true that you can indeed hear the beating of your own heart; you fear, but know not what you fear; and being the only living creature there, you are impressed with a thought of death. But soon to that severe silence you are more than reconciled; the solitude, without ceasing to be sublime, is felt to be solemn and not awful, and ere long, utter as it is, serene. Seen from afar, the forest was one black mass; but as you advance, it opens up into spacious glades, beautiful as gardens, with appropriate trees of gentler tribes, and ground-flowering in the sun. But there is no murmur of bee—no song of bird. In the air a thin whisper of insects—intermittent—and wafted quite away by a breath. For we are now in the very centre of the forest, and

even the cushat haunts not here. Hither the red-deer may come—but not now—for at this season they love the hill. To such places the stricken stag might steal to lie down and die.

And thus for hours may you be lost in the forest, nor all the while have wasted one thought on the outer world, till with no other warning but an uncertain glimmer and a strange noise, you all at once issue forth into the open day, and are standing on the brink of a precipice above a flood. It comes tumbling down with a succession of falls, in a mile-long course, right opposite your stance—rocks, cliffs, and trees, all the way up on either side, majestically retiring back to afford ample channel, and showing an unobstructed vista, closed up by the purple mountain, that seems to send forth the river from a cavern in its breast. 'Tis the Glen of Pines. Nor ash nor oak is suffered to intrude on their dominion. Since the earthquake first shattered it out, this great chasm, with all its chasms, has been held by one race of trees. No other seed could there spring to life; for from the rocks has all soil, ages ago, been washed and swept by the tempests. But there they stand with glossy boles, spreading arms, and glittering crest; and those two by themselves on the summit, known all over Badenoch as "the Giants"—their "statures reach the sky."

We have been indulging in a dream of old. Before our day the immemorial gloom of Glenmore had perished, and it ceased to be a forest. But there bordered on it another region of night or twilight, and in its vast depths we first felt the sublimity of lonesome fear. Rothiemurchus! The very word blackens before our eyes with necromantic characters—again we plunge into its gulfs desirous of what we dread—again, "in pleasure high and turbulent," we climb the cliffs of Cairngorm.

Would you wish to know what is now the look of Glenmore? One now dead and gone—a man of wayward temper, but of genius—shall tell you—and think not the picture exaggerated—for you would not, if you were *there*. "It is the wreck of the ancient forest which arrests all the attention, and which renders Glenmore a melancholy, more than a melancholy, a terrific spectacle. Trees of enormous height, which have escaped alike the axe and the tempest, are still standing, stripped by the winds, even of the bark, and, like gigantic

skeletons, throwing far and wide their white and bleached bones to the storms and rains of heaven; while others, broken by the violence of the gales, lift up their split and fractured trunks in a thousand shapes of resistance and of destruction, or still display some knotted and tortuous branches, stretched out, in sturdy and fantastic forms of defiance, to the whirlwind and the winter. Noble trunks also, which had long resisted, but resisted in vain, strew the ground; some lying on the declivity where they have fallen, others still adhering to the precipice where they were rooted, many upturned, with their twisted and entangled roots high in air; while not a few astonish us by the space which they cover, and by dimensions which we could not otherwise have estimated. It is one wide image of death, as if the angel of destruction had passed over the valley. The sight even of a felled tree is painful; still more is that of the fallen forest, with all its green branches on the ground, withering, silent, and at rest, where once they glittered in the dew and the sun, and trembled in the breeze. Yet this is but an image of vegetable death. It is familiar, and the impression passes away. It is the naked skeleton bleaching in the winds, the gigantic bones of the forest still erect, the speaking records of former life, and of strength still unsubdued, vigorous even in death, which renders Glenmore one enormous charnel-house."

What happened of old to the aboriginal Forests of Scotland, that long before these later destructions they had almost all perished, leaving, to bear witness what they were, such survivors? They were chiefly destroyed by fire. What power could extinguish chance-kindled conflagrations, when sailing before the wind? And no doubt fire was set to clear the country at once of Scotch firs, wolves, wild-boars, and outlaws. Tradition yet tells of such burnings; and, if we mistake not, the pines found in the Scottish mosses, the logs and the stocks, all show that they were destroyed by Vulcan, though Neptune buried them in the quagmires. Storms no doubt often levelled them by thousands; but had millions so fallen they had never been missed, and one Element only—which has been often fearfully commissioned—could achieve the work. In our own day the axe has indeed done wonders—and sixteen square miles of the Forest of Rothiemurchus "went to the ground." John of Ghent, Gilpin tells us, to avenge an

inroad, set twenty-four thousand axes at work in the Caledonian Forest.

Yet Scotland has perhaps sufficient forests at this day. For more has been planted than cut down; Glenmore will soon be populous as ever with self-sown pines, and Rothiemurchus may revive; the shades are yet deep of Loch-Arkaig, Glengarry, Glenmoriston, Strathglass, Glen-Strathfarrar, and Loch-Shiel; deeper still on the Findhorn—and deepest of all on the Dee, rejoicing in the magnificent pine-woods of Invercauld and Braemar.

We feel that we have spoken feebly of our Highland forests. Some, perhaps, who have never been off the high-roads, may accuse us of exaggeration too; but they contain wondrous beauties of which we have said not a word; and no imagination can conceive what they may be in another hundred years. But, apparently far apart from the forests, though still belonging to them, for they hold in fancy by the tenure of the olden time, how many woods, and groves, and sprinklings of fair trees, rise up during a day's journey, in almost every region of the North! And among them all, it may be, scarcely a pine. For the oak, and the ash, and the elm, are also all native trees; nowhere else does the rowan flush with more dazzling lustre; in spring, the alder with its vivid green stands well beside the birk—the yew was not neglected of yore, though the bow of the Celt was weak to that of the Saxon; and the holly, in winter emulating the brightness of the pine, flourished, and still flourishes on many a mountain-side. There is sufficient sylvan scenery for beauty in a land of mountains. More may be needed for shelter—but let the young plants and seedlings have time to grow—and as for the old trees, may they live for ever! Too many millions of larches are perhaps growing now behind the Tay and the Tilt; yet why should the hills of Perthshire be thought to be disfigured by what ennobles the Alps and the Apennines?

Hitherto we have hardly said a word about Lochs, and have been doing our best to forget them, while imagining scenes that were chiefly characterised by other great features of Highland Landscape. A country thus constituted, and with such an aspect, even if we could suppose it without lochs, would still be a glorious region; but its lochs are indeed its greatest glory: by them its glens, its mountains, and its woods,

are all illumined, and its rivers made to sing aloud for joy. In the pure element, overflowing so many spacious vales and glens profound, the great and stern objects of nature look even more sublime or more beautiful in their reflected shadows, which appear in that stillness to belong rather to heaven than earth. Or the evanescence of all that imagery at a breath may touch us with the thought, that all it represents, steadfast as seems its endurance, will as utterly pass away. Such visions, when gazed on in that wondrous depth and purity they are sometimes seen to assume on a still summer day, always inspire some such faint feeling as this; and we sigh to think how transitory must be all things, when the setting sun is seen to sink beneath the mountain, and all its golden pomp at the same instant to evanish from the lake.

The first that takes possession of the imagination, dreaming of the Highlands as the region of Lochs, is the Queen of them all, Loch Lomond. A great poet has said that, "in Scotland, the proportion of diffused water is often too great, as at the Lake of Geneva, for instance, and in most of the Scottish lakes. No doubt it sounds magnificent, and flatters the imagination, to hear at a distance of masses of water, so many leagues in length and miles in width; and such ample room may be delightful to the fresh-water sailor, scudding with a lively breeze amid the rapidly-shifting scenery. But who ever travelled along the banks of Loch Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination of the long vista of blank water would be acceptable, and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees, and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side? In fact, a notion of grandeur, as connected with magnitude, has seduced persons of taste into a general mistake upon this subject. It is much more desirable, for the purposes of pleasure, that lakes should be numerous and small or middle-sized, than large, not only for communication by walks and rides, but for variety, and for recurrence of similar appearances. To illustrate this by one instance: how pleasing is it to have a ready and frequent opportunity of watching, at the outlet of a lake, the stream, pushing its way among the rocks, in lively contrast with the stillness from which it has escaped! and how amusing to compare its noisy and turbulent motions with the gentle playfulness of the breezes that may be starting up, or

wandering here and there, over the faintly-rippled surface of the broad water! I may add, as a general remark, that in lakes of great width the shores cannot be distinctly seen at the same time, and therefore contribute little to mutual illustration and ornament; and if the opposite shores are out of sight of each other, like those of the American and Asiatic lakes, then unfortunately the traveller is reminded of a nobler object—he has the blankness of a sea-prospect without the grandeur and accompanying sense of power."

We shall not be suspected of an inclination to dissent, on light grounds, from any sentiments of Wordsworth. But finely felt and expressed as all this is, we do not hesitate to say that it is not applicable to Loch Lomond. Far be it from us to criticise this passage sentence by sentence; for we have quoted it not in a captious, but a reverent spirit, as we have ever done with the works of this illustrious man. He has studied nature more widely and profoundly than we have; but it is out of our power to look on Loch Lomond without a feeling of perfection. The "diffusion of water" is indeed great; but in what a world it floats! At first sight of it, how our soul expands! The sudden revelation of such majestic beauty, wide as it is and extending afar, inspires us with a power of comprehending it all. Sea-like indeed it is—a Mediterranean Sea—enclosed with lofty hills and as lofty mountains—and these indeed are the Fortunate Isles! We shall not dwell on the feeling which all must have experienced on the first sight of such a vision—the feeling of a lovely and a mighty calm; it is manifest that the spacious "diffusion of water" more than conspires with the other components of such a scene to produce the feeling; that to it belongs the spell that makes our spirit serene, still, and bright, as its own. Nor when such feeling ceases so entirely to possess, and so deeply to affect us, does the softened and subdued charm of the scene before us depend less on the expanse of the "diffusion of water." The islands, that before had lain we knew not how—or we had only felt that they were all most lovely—begin to show themselves in the order of their relation to one another and to the shores. The eye rests on the largest, and with them the lesser combine; or we look at one or two of the least, away by themselves, or remote from all a tufted rock; and many as they are, they break not the breadth of the liquid plain, for

it is ample as the sky. They show its amplitude, as masses and sprinklings of clouds, and single clouds, show the amplitude of the cerulean vault. And then the long promontories —stretching out from opposite mainlands, and enclosing bays that in themselves are lakes—they too magnify the empire of water; for long as they are, they seem so only as our eye attends them with their cliffs and woods from the retiring shores, and far distant are their shadows from the central light. Then what shores! On one side, where the lake is widest, low-lying they seem, and therefore lovelier—undulating with fields and groves, where many a pleasant dwelling is embowered, into lines of hills that gradually soften away into another land. On the other side, sloping back, or overhanging, mounts beautiful in their bareness, for they are green as emerald; others, scarcely more beautiful, studded with fair trees—some altogether woods. They soon form into mountains—and the mountains become more and more majestical, yet beauty never deserts them, and her spirit continues to tame that of the frowning cliffs. Far off as they are, Benlomond and Benvorlich are seen to be giants; magnificent is their retinue, but they two are supreme, each in his own dominion; and clear as the day is here, they are diadem'd with clouds.

It cannot be that the "proportion of diffused water is here too great;" and is it then true that no one "ever travelled along the banks of Loch Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination to the long vista of blank water would be acceptable, and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees, and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side?" We have travelled along them in all weathers and never felt such a wish. For there they all are — all but the "sparkling stream to run by our side," and we see not how that well could be in nature. "Streams that sparkle as they run," cross our path on their own; and brighter never issued from the woods. Along the margin of the water, as far as Luss—ay, and much farther—the variations of the foreground are incessant; "had it no other beauties," it has been truly said, "but those of its shores, it would still be an object of prime attraction; whether from the bright-green meadows sprinkled with luxuriant ash-trees, that sometimes skirt its margin, or its white pebbled shores on which its gentle billows murmur,

like a miniature ocean, or its bold rocky promontories rising from the dark water, rich in wildflowers and ferns, and tangled with wild roses and honeysuckles, or its retired bays where the waves dash, reflecting, like a mirror, the trees which hang over them, an inverted landscape." The islands are for ever arranging themselves into new forms, every one more and more beautiful; at least so they seem to be, perpetually occurring, yet always unexpected, and there is a pleasure even in such a series of slight surprises that enhances the delight of admiration. And alongside, or behind us, all the while, are the sylvan mountains, "laden with beauty;" and ever and anon open glens widen down upon us from chasms; or forest-glades lead our hearts away into the inner gloom—perhaps our feet; and there, in a field that looks not as if it had been cleared by his own hands, but left clear by nature, a woodsman's hut.

Half-way between Luss and Tarbet the water narrows, but it is still wide; the new road, we believe, winds round the point of Firkin, the old road boldly scaled the height, as all old roads loved to do; ascend it, and bid the many-isled vision, in all its greatest glory, farewell. Thence upwards prevails the spirit of the mountains. The lake is felt to belong to them—to be subjected to their will—and that is capricious; for sometimes they suddenly blacken it when at its brightest, and sometimes when its gloom is like that of the grave, as if at their biding, all is light. We cannot help attributing the "skyey influences" which occasion such wonderful effects on the water, to prodigious mountains; for we cannot look on them without feeling that they reign over the solitude they compose; the lights and shadows flung by the sun and the clouds imagination assuredly regards as put forth by the vast objects which they colour; and we are inclined to think some such belief is essential in the profound awe, often amounting to dread, with which we are inspired by the presences of mere material forms. But be this as it may, the upper portion of Loch Lomond is felt by all to be most sublime. Near the head, all the manifold impressions of the beautiful which for hours our mind had been receiving, begin to fade; if some gloomy change has taken place in the air, there is a total obliteration, and the mighty scene before us is felt to possess not the hour merely, but the day. Yet should

sunshine come, and abide a while, beauty will glimpse upon us even here, for green pastures will smile vividly high up among the rocks; the sylvan spirit is serene the moment it is touched with light, and here there is not only many a fair tree by the water-side, but yon old oak-wood will look joyful on the mountain, and the gloom become glimmer in the profound abyss.

Wordsworth says that "it must be more desirable, for the purposes of pleasure, that lakes should be numerous, and small or middle-sized, than large, not only for communication by walks and rides, but for variety, and for recurrence of similar appearances." The Highlands have them of all sizes—and that surely is best. But here is one which, it has been truly said, is not only "incomparable in its beauty as in its dimensions, exceeding all others in variety as it does in extent and splendour, but unites in itself every style of scenery which is found in the other lakes of the Highlands." He who has studied, and understood, and felt all Loch Lomond, will be prepared at once to enjoy any other fine lake he looks on; nor will he admire nor love it the less, though its chief character should consist in what forms but one part of that of the Wonder in which all kinds of beauty and sublimity are combined.

We feel that it would be idle, and worse than idle, to describe any number of the Highland lochs, for so many of the finest have been seen by so many eyes that few persons probably will ever read these pages to whom such descriptions would be, at the best, more than shadowings of scenery that their own imaginations can more vividly re-create. There are other reasons for not saying a single word about some of the most beautiful; for genius has pictured and peopled them and the surrounding regions in colours that will never fade. Besides, in the volumes to which these "Remarks" are a preface—contributed with pleasure, somewhat impaired indeed by the consciousness of their many defects and imperfections—views of them all are submitted to the eye; and it is not to be thought that we could by words add to the effect of the works of such artists. These objections do not apply to what we have written respecting the character of the Scenery of the Highlands, apart, as far as that may be, from their lochs; and it may have in some measure illustrated them

also, if it has at all truly characterised the mountains, the glens, the rivers, the forests, and the woods.

We may be allowed, however, to say, that there cannot be a greater mistake than to think, as many, we believe, do who have only heard of the Highland Lochs, that, with the exception of those famous for their beauty as well as their grandeur, beauty is not only not the quality by which they are distinguished, but that it is rarely found in them at all. There are few, possessing any very marked character, in which beauty is not either an ingredient or an accompaniment; and there are many "beautiful exceedingly," which, lying out of the way even of somewhat adventurous travellers, or very remote, are known, if even by that, only by name. It does not, indeed, require much, in some situations, to give a very touching beauty to water. A few trees, a few knolls, a few tufted rocks, will do it, where all around and above is stern or sterile; and how strong may be the gentle charm, if the torrent that feeds the little loch chance to flow into it from a lucid pool formed by a waterfall, and to flow out of it in a rivulet that enlivens the dark heather with a vale of verdure over which a stag might bound—and more especially if there be two or three huts in which it is perceived there is human life! We believe we slightly touched before on such scenes; but any little repetition will be excused for the sake of a very picturesque passage, which we have much pleasure in quoting from the very valuable "Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland," by the brothers Anderson. We well remember walking into the scene here so well painted, many long years ago, and have indeed, somewhere or other, described it. The Fall of Foyers is the most magnificent cataract, out of all sight and hearing, in Britain. The din is quite loud enough in ordinary weather—and it is only in ordinary weather that you can approach the place from which you have a full view of all its grandeur. When the Fall is in flood—to say nothing of being drenched to the skin—you are so blinded by the sharp spray-smoke, and so deafened by the dashing and clashing, and tumbling and rumbling thunder, that your condition is far from enviable, as you cling, "lonely lover of nature," to a shelf by no means eminent for safety, above the horrid gulf. Nor in former times was there any likelihood of your being comforted by the accommoda-

tions of the General's Hut. In ordinary Highland weather—meaning thereby weather neither very wet nor very dry—it is worth walking a thousand miles for one hour to behold the Fall of Foyers. The spacious cavity is enclosed by "complicated cliffs and perpendicular precipices" of immense height, and though for a while it wears to the eye a savage aspect, yet beauty fears not to dwell even there, and the horror is softened by what appears to be masses of tall shrubs, or single shrubs almost like trees. And they are trees, which on the level plain would look even stately; but as they ascend ledge above ledge the walls of that awful chasm, it takes the eye time to see them as they really are, while on our first discernment of their character, serenely standing among the tumult, they are felt on such sites to be sublime.

"Between the Falls and the Strath of Stratherrik," says the Book we were about to quote, "a space of three or four miles, the river Foyers flows through a series of low rocky hills clothed with birch. They present various quiet glades and open spaces, where little patches of cultivated ground are encircled by wooded hillocks, whose surface is pleasingly diversified by nodding trees, bare rocks, empurpled heath, and bracken bearing herbage." It was the excessive loveliness of some of the scenery there that suggested to us the thought of going to look what kind of a stream the Foyers was above the Fall. We went, and in the quiet of a summer evening, found it

"Was even the gentlest of all gentle things."

But here is the promised description of it. "Before pursuing our way westward, we would wish to direct the traveller's attention to a sequestered spot of peculiar beauty on the river Foyers. This is a secluded vale, called Killean, which, besides its natural attractions—and these are many—is distinguished as one of the few places where the old practice of resorting to the 'shieling' for summer grazing of cattle is still observed. It is encompassed on all sides by steep mountains; but at the north end there is a small lake, about a mile and a half in length, and from one-third to half a mile in breadth. The remainder of the bottom of the glen is a perfectly level tract, of the same width with the lake, and about

two miles and a half in length, covered with the richest herbage, and traversed by a small meandering river flowing through it into the lake. The surface of this flat is bedecked with the little huts or bothies which afford temporary accommodation to the herdsmen and others in charge of the cattle. This portion of the glen is bordered on the west by continuous hills rising abruptly in a uniformly steep acclivity, and passing above into a perpendicular range of precipices, the whole covered with a scanty verdure sprouted with heath. At a bend of the lake near its middle, where it inclines from a northernly course towards the west, a magnificent rounded precipice, which, like the continuous ranges, may be about 1200 feet in height, rises immediately out of the water; and a few narrow and inclined verdant stripes alone preserve it from exhibiting a perfectly mural character. To this noble rock succeeds, along the rest of the lake, a beautiful, lofty, and nearly vertical hill-side, clothed with birch, intermingled with hanging mossy banks, shaded over with the deeper-tinted bracken. The eastern side of the plain, and the adjoining portion of the lake, are lined by mountains corresponding in height with those opposed to them; but their lower extremities are, to a considerable extent, strewed with broken fragments of rock, to which succeeds an uninterrupted zone of birch and alder, which is again overtopped in its turn by naked cliffs. An elevated terrace occupies the remainder of this side of the lake; above the wooded face of which is seen a sloping expanse of mingled heath and herbage. About half a mile from the south end, Mr Fraser of Lovat, the proprietor, has erected a shooting-lodge; viewed from which, or from either end, or from the top of the platform on the north-east side of the lake, fancy could scarcely picture a more attractive and fairy landscape than is unfolded by this sequestered vale, to which Dr Johnson's description of the 'Happy Valley' not inaptly applies. The milch cows, to the number of several hundreds, are generally kept here from the beginning of June to the middle of August, when they are replaced by the yeld cattle. The river sweeps to the northward from Loch Killean through richly birch-clad hills, which rise in swelling slopes from its banks. A large tarn which immediately joins it from the east is crossed at its mouth by a rustic bridge, from which a single footpath con-

ducts across the brow of the hill to Whitebridge, a small public-house or inn, four miles distant."

There is a loch of a very different character from Killean, almost as little known (one view of it is given in the book), equal to anything in the Highlands, only two miles distant from Loch Lochy, in the Great Glen—Loch Arkaig. We first visited it many years since, having been induced to do so by a passage in John Stoddart's "Remarks on the Local Scenery and Manners of Scotland;" and it was then a very noble oak and pine forest loch. The axe went to work and kept steadily at it; and a great change was wrought; but it is still a grand scene, with a larger infusion of beauty than it possessed of old. The scenery of the valley separating it from Loch Lochy is very similar to that of the Trossachs; through it there are two approaches to the loch, and the *Mile-Dubh*, or the Dark Mile, according to our feeling, is more impressive than any part of the approach to Loch Katrine. The woods and rocks are very solemn, and yet very sweet; for though many old pines and oaks and ashes are there, and the wall of rocks is immense, young trees prevail now on many places, as well along the heights as among the knolls and hillocks below, where alders and hawthorns are thick; almost everywhere the young are intermingled with the old, and look cheerful under their protection, without danger of being chilled by their shade. The loch, more or less sylvan from end to end, shows on its nearer shores some magnificent remains of the ancient forest, and makes a noble sweep like some great river. There may be more, but we remember but one island —not large, but wooded as it should be—the burying-place of the family of Lochiel. What rest! It is a long journey from Loch Lochy to Kinloch Arkaig—and by the silent waters we walked or sat all a summer's day. There was nothing like a road that we observed, but the shores are easily travelled, and there it is you may be almost sure of seeing some red-deer. They are no better worth looking at from a window than Fallow—no offence to Fallow, who are fine creatures; indeed, we had rather not see them so at all; but on the shores or steeps of Loch Arkaig, with hardly a human habitation within many, many miles, and these few rather known than seen to be there, the huts of Highlanders contented to cultivate here and there some spot that seems culti-

vatable, but probably is found not to be so after some laborious years—there they are at home; and you, if young, looking on them, feel at home too, and go bounding, like one of themselves, over what, did you choose, were an evitable steep. Roe, too, frequent the copses, but to be seen they must be started; grouse spring up before you oftener than you might expect in a deer forest; but, to be sure, it is a rough and shaggy one, though lovelier lines of verdure never lay in the sunshine than we think we see now lying for miles along the margin of that loch. The numerous mountains towards the head of the loch are very lofty, and glens diverge in grand style into opposite and distant regions. Glen Dessary, with its beautiful pastures, opens on the loch, and leads to Loch Nevish on the coast of Knoidart—Glen Pæan to Oben-a-Cave on Loch Morer, Glen Canagorie into Glenfinnan and Loch Shiel; and Glen Kingie to Glengarry and Loch Quoich. There is a choice! We chose Glen Kingie, and after a long climb found a torrent that took us down to Glengarry before sunset. It is a loch little known, and in grandeur not equal to Loch Arkaig; but at the close of such a day's journey, the mind, elevated by the long contemplation of the great objects of nature, cannot fail to feel aright, whatever it may be, the spirit of the scene, that seems to usher in the grateful hour of rest. It is surpassing fair—and having lain all night long on its gentle banks, sleeping or waking we know not, we have never remembered it since but as the Land of Dreams.

Which is the dreariest, most desolate, and dismal of the Highland Lochs? We should say Loch Ericht. It lies in a prodigious wilderness, with which perhaps no man alive is conversant, and in which you may travel for days without seeing even any symptoms of human life. We speak of the regions comprehended between the Forest of Atholl and Bennevis, the Moor of Rannoch and Glen Spean. There are many lochs—and Loch Ericht is their grisely Queen. Herdsmen, shepherds, hunters, fowlers, anglers, traverse its borders, but few have been far in the interior, and we never knew anybody who had crossed it from south to north, from east to west. We have ourselves seen more of it, perhaps, than any other Lowlander; and had traversed many of its vast glens and moors, before we found our way to the southern solitude of Loch Ericht. We came into the western gloom of Ben Auler

from Loch Ouchan, and up and down for hours dismal but not dangerous precipices that opened out into what might almost be called passes—but we had frequently to go back, for they were blind—contrived to clamber to the edge of one of the mountains that rose from the water a few miles down the loch. All was vast, shapeless, savage, black, and wrathfully grim; for it was one of those days that keep frowning and lowering, yet will not thunder; such as one conceives of on the eve of an earthquake. At first the sight was dreadful, but there was no reason for dread; imagination remains not longer than she chooses the slave of her own eyes, and we soon began to enjoy the gloom, and to feel how congenial it was in nature with the character of all those lifeless cliffs. Silence and darkness suit well together in solitude at noonday, and settled on huge objects make them sublime. And they were huge; all ranged together, and stretching away to a great distance, with the pitchy water, still as if frozen, covering their feet.

Loch Ericht is many miles long—nearly twenty; but there is a loch among the Grampians not more than two miles round, if so much, which is sublimer far—Loch Aven. You come upon the sight of it at once, a short way down from the summit of Cairngorm, and then it is some two thousand feet below you, itself being as many above the level of the sea. But to come upon it so as to feel best its transcendent grandeur, you should approach it up Glenaven—and from as far down as Inch-Rouran, which is about half-way between Loch Aven and Tomantoul. Between Inch-Rouran and Tomantoul the glen is wild, but it is inhabited; above that house there is but one other; and for about a dozen miles—we have heard it called far more—there is utter solitude. But never was there a solitude at once so wild, so solemn, so serene, so sweet! The glen is narrow; but on one side there are openings into several wider glens, that show you mighty coves as you pass on; on the other side the mountains are without a break, and the only variation with them is from smooth to shaggy, from dark to bright; but their prevailing character is that of pastoral or of forest peace. The mountains that show the coves belong to the bases of Ben-Aven and Ben-y-buird. The heads of those giants are not seen—but it sublimes the long glen to know that it belongs to their

dominion, and that it is leading us on to an elevation that ere long will be on a level with the roots of their topmost cliffs. The Aven is so clear—on account of the nature of its channel—that you see the fishes hanging in every pool; and 'tis not possible to imagine how beautiful in such transparencies are the reflections of its green ferny banks. For miles they are composed of knolls, seldom interspersed with rocks, and there cease to be any trees. But ever and anon we walk for a while on a level floor, and the voice of the stream is mute. Hitherto sheep have been noticed on the hill, but not many, and red and black cattle grazing on the lower pastures; but they disappear, and we find ourselves all at once in a desert. So it is felt to be, coming so suddenly with its black heather on that greenest grass; but 'tis such a desert as the red-deer love. We are now high up on the breast of the mountain, which appears to be Cairngorm; but such heights are deceptive, and it is not till we again see the bed of the Aven that we are assured we are still in the glen. Prodigious precipices, belonging to several different mountains, for between mass and mass there is blue sky, suddenly arise, forming themselves more and more regularly into circular order, as we near; and now we have sight of the whole magnificence; yet vast as it is, we know not yet how vast; it grows as we gaze, till in a while we feel that sublimer it may not be; and then so quiet in all its horrid grandeur we feel too that it is beautiful, and think of the Maker.

This is Loch Aven. How different the whole region round from that enclosing Loch Ericht! There, vast wildernesses of more than melancholy moors—huge hollows hating their own gloom that keeps them herbless—disconsolate glens left far away by themselves, without any sign of life—cliffs that frown back the sunshine—and mountains, as if they were all dead, insensible to the heavens. Is this all mere imagination —or the truth? We deceive ourselves in what we call a desert. For we have so associated our own being with the appearances of outward things, that we attribute to them, with an uninquiring faith, the very feelings and the very thoughts, of which we have chosen to make them emblems. But here the sources of the Dee seem to lie in a region as happy as it is high; for the bases of the mountains are all such as the soul has chosen to make sublime—the colouring

of the mountains all such as the soul has chosen to make beautiful; and the whole region, thus imbued with a power to inspire elevation and delight, is felt to be indeed one of the very noblest in nature.

We have now nearly reached the limits assigned to our "Remarks on the Character of the Scenery of the Highlands;" and we feel that the sketches we have drawn of its component qualities—occasionally filled up with some details—must be very imperfect indeed without comprehending some parts of the coast, and some of the sea-arms that stretch into the interior. But even had our limits allowed, we do not think we could have ventured on such an attempt; for though we have sailed along most of the western shores, and through some of its sounds, and into many of its bays, and up not a few of its reaches, yet they contain such an endless variety of all the fairest and greatest objects of nature, that we feel it would be far beyond our powers to give anything like an adequate idea of the beauty and the grandeur that for ever kept unfolding themselves around our summer voyagings in calm or storm. Who can say that he knows a thousandth part of the wonders of "the marine" between the Mull of Cantire and Cape Wrath? He may have gathered many an extensive shore—threaded many a mazy multitude of isles—sailed up many a spacious bay—and cast anchor at the head of many a haven land-locked so as no more to seem to belong to the sea—yet other voyagers shall speak to him of innumerable sights which he has never witnessed; and they who are most conversant with those coasts, best know how much they have left and must leave for ever unexplored.

Look now only at the Linnhe Loch—how it gladdens Argyll! Without it and the Sound of Mull how sad would be the shadows of Morvern! Eclipsed the splendours of Lorn! Ascend one of the heights of Appin, and as the waves roll in light, you will see how the mountains are beautified by the sea. There is a majestic rolling onwards there that belongs to no land-loch—only to the world of waves. There is no nobler image of ordered power than the tide, whether in flow or in ebb; and on all now it is felt to be beneficent, coming and going daily, to enrich and adorn. Or in fancy will you embark, and let the Amethyst bound away "at her own sweet

will," accordant with yours, till she reach the distant and long-desired loch.

> "Loch-Sunart! who, when tides and tempests roar,
> Comes in among these mountains from the main,
> 'Twixt wooded Ardnamurchan's rocky cape
> And Ardmore's shingly beach of hissing spray;
> And while his thunders bid the sound of Mull
> Be dumb, sweeps onwards past a hundred bays
> Hill-shelter'd from the wrath that foams along
> The mad mid-channel,—All as quiet they
> As little separate worlds of summer dreams,—
> And by storm-loving birds attended up
> The mountain-hollow, white in their career
> As are the breaking billows, spurns the Isles
> Of craggy Carnich, and green Oronsay
> Drench'd in that sea-born shower o'er tree-tops driven,
> And ivied stones of what was once a tower,
> Now hardly known from rocks—and gathering might
> In the long reach between Dungallan caves
> And point of Arderinis ever fair
> With her Elysian groves, bursts through that strait
> Into another ampler inland sea;
> Till lo! subdued by some sweet influence,—
> And potent is she, though so meek the Eve,—
> Down sinketh wearied the old Ocean
> Insensibly into a solemn calm,—
> And all along that ancient burial-ground
> (Its kirk is gone), that seemeth now to lend
> Its own eternal quiet to the waves,
> Restless no more, into a perfect peace
> Lulling and lull'd at last, while drop the airs
> Away as they were dead, the first-risen star
> Beholds that lovely Archipelago,
> All shadow'd there as in a spiritual world,
> Where time's mutations shall come never more!"

These lines describe but one of innumerable lochs that owe their greatest charm to the sea. It is indeed one of those on which nature has lavished all her infinite varieties of loveliness; but Loch Leven is scarcely less fair, and perhaps grander; and there is matchless magnificence above Loch Etive. All round about Ballahulish and Inverco the scenery of Loch Leven is

the sweetest ever seen overshadowed by such mountains; the deeper their gloom, the brighter its lustre; in all weathers it wears a cheerful smile; and often while up among the rocks the tall trees are tossing in the storm, the heart of the woods beneath is calm, and the vivid fields they shelter look as if they still enjoyed the sun. Nor closes the beauty there, but even animates the entrance into that dreadful glen—Glencoe. All the way up its river, Loch Leven would be fair, were it only for her hanging woods. But though the glen narrows, it still continues broad, and there are green plains between her waters and the mountains, on which stately trees stand single, and there is ample room for groves. The returning tide tells us, should we forget it, that this is no inland loch, for it hurries away back to the sea, not turbulent, but fast as a river in flood. The river Leven is one of the finest in the Highlands, and there is no other such series of waterfalls, all seen at once, one above the other, along an immense vista; and all the way up to the furthest there are noble assemblages of rocks—nowhere any want of wood—and in places, trees that seem to have belonged to some old forest. Beyond, the opening in the sky seems to lead into another region, and it does so; for we have gone that way, past some small lochs, across a wide wilderness, with mountains on all sides, and descended on Loch Treag,

> "A loch whom there are none to praise,
> And very few to love,"

but overflowing in our memory with all pleasantest images of pastoral contentment and peace.

Loch Etive, between the ferries of Connel and Bunawe, has been seen by almost all who have visited the Highlands—but very imperfectly; to know what it is, you must row or sail up it, for the banks on both sides are often richly wooded, assume many fine forms, and are frequently well embayed, while the expanse of water is sufficiently wide to allow you from its centre to command a view of many of the distant heights. But above Bunawe it is not like the same loch. For a couple of miles it is not wide, and it is so darkened by enormous shadows that it looks even less like a strait than a gulf—huge overhanging rocks on both sides ascending high, and yet felt to belong but to the bases of mountains that sloping

far back have their summits among clouds of their own in another region of the sky. Yet are they not all horrid; for nowhere else is there such lofty heather—it seems a wild sort of brushwood; tall trees flourish, single or in groves, chiefly birches, with now and then an oak—and they are in their youth or their prime—and even the prodigious trunks, some of which have been dead for centuries, are not all dead, but shoot from their knotted rind symptoms of life inextinguishable by time and tempest. Out of this gulf we emerge into the Upper Loch, and its amplitude sustains the majesty of the mountains, all of the highest order, and seen from their feet to their crests. Cruachan wears the crown, and reigns over them all—king at once of Loch Etive and of Loch Awe. But Buachaille Etive, though afar off, is still a giant, and in some lights comes forwards, bringing with him the Black Mount and its dependents, so that they all seem to belong to this most magnificent of all Highland lochs. "I know not," says Macculloch, "that Loch Etive could bear an ornament without an infringement on that aspect of solitary vastness which it presents throughout. Nor is there one. The rocks and bays on the shore, which might elsewhere attract attention, are here swallowed up in the enormous dimensions of the surrounding mountains, and the wide and ample expanse of the lake. A solitary house, here fearfully solitary, situated far up in Glen Etive, is only visible when at the upper extremity; and if there be a tree, as there are in a few places on the shore, it is unseen; extinguished as if it were a humble mountain flower, by the universal magnitude around." This is finely felt and expressed; but even on the shores of Loch Etive there is much of the beautiful; Ardmatty smiles with its meadows, and woods, and bay, and sylvan stream; other sunny nooks repose among the grey granite masses; the colouring of the banks and braes is often bright; several houses or huts become visible no long way up the glen; and though that long hollow—half a day's journey—till you reach the wild road between Inveruran and King's House—lies in gloom, yet the hillsides are cheerful, and you delight in the greensward, wide and rock-broken, should you ascend the passes that lead into Glencreran or Glencoe. But to feel the full power of Glen Etive you must walk up it till it ceases to be a glen. When in the middle of the moor, you see far off a

solitary dwelling indeed—perhaps the loneliest house in all the Highlands—and the solitude is made profounder, as you pass by, by the voice of a cataract, hidden in an awful chasm, bridged by two or three stems of trees, along which the red-deer might fear to venture—but we have seen them and the deer-hounds glide over it, followed by other fearless feet, when far and wide the Forest of Dalness was echoing to the hunter's horn.

We have now brought our Remarks on the Scenery of the Highlands to a close, and would fain have said a few words on the character and life of the people; but are precluded from even touching on that most interesting subject. It is impossible that the minds of travellers through those wonderful regions, can be so occupied with the contemplation of mere inanimate nature, as not to give many a thought to their inhabitants, now and in the olden time. Indeed, without such thoughts, they would often seem to be but blank and barren wildernesses, in which the heart would languish, and imagination itself recoil; but they cannot long be so looked at, for houseless as are many extensive tracts, and therefore at times felt to be too dreary even for moods that for a while enjoyed the absence of all that might tell of human life, yet symptoms and traces of human life are noticeable to the instructed eye almost everywhere, and in them often lies the spell that charms us, even while we think that we are wholly delivered up to the influence of "dead insensate things." None will visit the Highlands without having some knowledge of their history; and the changes that have long been taking place in the condition of the people will be affectingly recognised wherever they go, in spite even of what might have appeared the insuperable barriers of nature.

"Time and Tide
Have washed away, like weeds upon the sands,
Crowds of the olden life's memorials;
And 'mid the mountains you as well might seek
For the lone site of fancy's filmy dreams.
Towers have decay'd and moulder'd from the cliffs,
Or their green age, or grey, has help'd to build
New dwellings sending up their household smoke
From treeless places once inhabited
But by the secret sylvans. On the moors

The pillar-stone, reared to perpetuate
The fame of some great battle, or the power
Of storied necromancer in the wild,
Among the wide change on the heather-bloom
By power more wondrous wrought than his, its name
Has lost, or fallen itself has disappear'd ;
No broken fragment suffer'd to impede
The glancing ploughshare. All the ancient woods
Are thinn'd and let in floods of daylight now,
Then dark and dern as when the Druids lived.
Narrow'd is now the red-deer's forest reign ;
The royal race of eagles is extinct.
But other changes than on moor and cliff
Have tamed the aspect of the wilderness ;
The simple system of primeval life,
Simple but stately, hath been broken down ;
The clans are scatter'd, and the chieftain's power
Is dead, or dying—but a name—though yet
It sometimes stirs the desert ; to the winds
The tall plumes wave no more—the tartan green
With fiery streaks among the heather-bells
Now glows unfrequent ; and the echoes mourn
The silence of the music that of old
Kept war-thoughts stern amid the calm of peace.
Yet to far battle plains still Morven sends
Her heroes, and still glittering in the sun,
Or blood-dimm'd, her dread line of bayonets
Marches with loud shouts straight to victory.
A soften'd radiance now floats o'er her glens ;
No rare sight now upon her sea-arm lochs
The sail oft-veering up the solitude ;
And from afar the noise of life is brought
Within the thunders of her cataracts.
These will flow on for ever ; and the crests,
Gold-tipt by rising and by setting suns,
Of her old mountains inaccessible
Glance down their scorn for ever on the toils
That load with harvests now the humbler hills,
Now shorn of all their heather bloom, and green
Or yellow as the gleam of lowland fields.
And bold hearts in broad bosoms still are there,
Living and dying peacefully ; the huts
Abodes are still of high-soul'd poverty ;
And underneath their lintels beauty stoops
Her silken-snooded head, when singing goes

The maiden to her father at his work
Among the woods, or joins the scanty line
Of barley-reapers on their narrow ridge,
In some small field among the pastoral braes.
Still fragments dim of ancient poetry
In melancholy music down the glens
Go floating ; and from shieling roof'd with boughs,
And turf-wall'd, high up in some lonely place
Where flocks of sheep are nibbling the sweet grass
Of mid-summer, and browsing on the plants
On the cliff-mosses a few goats are seen
Among their kids, you hear sweet melodies
Attuned to some traditionary tale,
By young wife sitting all alone, aware
From shadow on the mountain horologe
Of the glad hour that brings her husband home
Before the gloaming, from the far-off moor
Where the black cattle feed ; there all alone
She sits and sings, except that on her knees
Sleeps the sweet offspring of their faithful loves."

We love the people too well to praise them—we have had too heartfelt experience of their virtues. In castle, hall, house, manse, hut, hovel, shieling—on mountain and moor, we have known, without having to study their character. It manifests itself in their manners, and in their whole frame of life. They are now, as they ever were, affectionate, faithful, and fearless; and far more delightful surely it is to see such qualities in all their pristine strength—for civilisation has not weakened, nor ever will weaken them—without that alloy of fierceness and ferocity which was inseparable from them in the turbulence of feudal times. They are now indeed a peaceful people ; severe as are the hardships of their condition, they are, in the main, contented with it ; and nothing short of necessity can dissever them from their dear mountains. We devoutly trust that there need be no more forced emigration—that henceforth it will be free—at the option of the adventurous—and that all who will, when the day cometh, may be gathered to their fathers in the land that gave them birth. Much remains to be done not only to relieve but enlighten ; yet Christian benevolence has not been forgetful of their wants ; schools and churches are arising in remote places ; and that they are in good truth a religious as well as a moral people is proved by

the passionate earnestness with which, in their worst destitution, they embrace every offer of instruction in the knowledge that leads to everlasting life. The blessing of Heaven will lie on all such missions as these; and the time will come when we shall be able to contemplate, without any pain, the condition of a race who, to use the noble language of one, though often scornful and sarcastic overmuch, yet at heart their friend, "almost in an hour subsided into peace and virtue, retaining their places, their possessions, their chiefs, their songs, their traditions, their superstitions and peculiar usages—even that language and those recollections which still separate them from the rest of the nation. They retained even their pride, and they retained their contempt of those who imposed that order on them, and still they settled into a state of obedience to that government, of which the world produces no other instance! It is a splendid moral phenomenon, and reflects a lustre on the Highland character, whether of the chiefs or the people, which extinguishes all past faults, and which atones for what little remains to be amended. A peculiar political situation was the cause of their faults; and that which swept away the cause, has rendered the effects a tale of other times."

END OF VOL. X.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH.

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